



GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# **Western Australian Government First Annual Implementation Progress Report of the Government Response to Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives 2024-25**

**October 2025**

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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Western Australian Government (Government) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this Country and recognises the continuing connection to land, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders past and present.

# Recognition of lived experience

The Government recognises both the individual and collective expertise of those with a lived, and living, experience of forced adoption. We acknowledge the courage and resilience of people who share their personal stories and perspectives and their willingness to work alongside government to contribute to improving the legislation, policies, practices and services that impact them. Embedding the expertise of those with lived and living experience is central to ensuring the wrongs of the past are never forgotten and never repeated.

# Language and terminology

The Government acknowledges that using certain language when referring to adoption may continue to negatively affect people who have experienced forced adoption. While efforts have been made to sensitively use language within this report, there are instances, for the purposes of clarity, where terms such as mother, father, adoptive parent(s) and adopted people/person are used. We recognise that language plays an important role in acknowledging people’s experiences and that not everyone will identify with this language or terminology.

# Counselling and support services

Counselling and support services are available for anyone who has experienced or is impacted by historic forced adoption policies and practices.

Organisation	Contact
<a href="#">Adoption Research and Counselling Services Inc</a> is an independent, not-for-profit community agency offering professional counselling, support, education, research and information to anyone living with the reality of adoption and/or being separated from family. Free counselling for people with experience of forced adoption is funded by the Department of Communities.	Phone: (08) 9370 4914

Organisation	Contact
<a href="#"><u>Relationships Australia (WA) Forced Adoption Support Service</u></a> provides a range of specialist trauma-informed support services for people affected by forced adoption. This is a free service funded by the Department of Social Services.	Phone: 1800 210 313
<a href="#"><u>Department of Communities Adoption Services</u></a> provides information, support and counselling relating to adoption, including information about peer support groups for people with lived experienced of adoption in Western Australia.	Phone: 1800 182 178
<a href="#"><u>Yorgum Healing Services Aboriginal Corporation</u></a> offers a variety of support services for Aboriginal people. This is a free service.	Phone: 1800 469 371

## Minister's foreword



As Minister for Child Protection, I am pleased to present the first annual Progress Report on the Western Australian Government's implementation of supported recommendations in the Government Response to Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives: Report on the Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption in Western Australia (the Government Response). The Parliamentary Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption demonstrated that past adoption policies and practices were wrong and harmful. The forced separation of mothers and fathers from their children inflicted life-long trauma, enduring grief and suffering.

These historic practices represented a significant system of failures by authorities and those in power to safeguard the parental rights of mothers and fathers and prioritise the best interests of children. The Western Australian Government is committed to ensuring these past wrongs are acknowledged and never repeated. I acknowledge the courage and determination of those who participated in the Inquiry and thank all those who have contributed to this important work. I would also like to acknowledge those who are no longer with us, whose lives were forever changed by the wrongful practices of the past.

In the 12 months since the release of the Government Response, the Western Australian Government has remained steadfast in its commitment to enact meaningful and purposeful change. A central priority for the Western Australian Government has been to ensure that the knowledge and expertise of people with lived experience of forced adoption informs the implementation of the supported recommendations. The Western Australian Forced Adoption Reference Group (the Reference Group) has been established, comprised of people with direct lived experience of forced adoption. The Reference Group has a vital role in providing information and guidance to the Government and ensures that people with lived experience play a key role in driving change across reforms to legislation, policy, practice and service design.

We have made important changes to improve awareness of, and access, to information and records, increased transparency in adoption data and provided information on the legislation, improved awareness of available mental health and support services, and improved consistency in service delivery. The Western Australian Government is committed to ensuring the remaining supported recommendations in the Government Response are implemented to address the longstanding impacts of forced adoption in WA.

**Hon Jessica Stojkovski MLA**

Minister For Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

## Introduction

The Western Australian Government (Government) accepts its past involvement in forced adoption and expresses deep regret for the historic policies and practices that forcibly separated mothers and fathers from their children and inflicted life-long trauma, enduring grief and suffering. We recognise that the trauma of historic forced adoption continues to impact on the daily lives of mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families today, and we express our deep remorse and apology.

The Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices uncovered a system of secrecy and misuse of power by individuals and institutions that inflicted harm, undermined people's rights and silenced their voices. The Inquiry represented an important opportunity for people with lived experience to have their experiences and trauma heard and publicly recorded.

The Government welcomed the findings and recommendations of Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives: Report on the Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption in Western Australia (Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives) and on 22 October 2024, tabled the Government Response to Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives (the Government Response).

Through the Government Response, 19 recommendations were supported or supported in principle, 14 recommendations required further consideration, and three recommendations were not supported. Importantly, the Government Response provides a way forward for how the Government, service providers, organisations, institutions and people with lived experience must work together to address the longstanding impacts of historic forced adoption policies and practices.

This report highlights the progress of the Government in implementing the supported recommendations in the Government Response for 2024-25 and the work undertaken on many of the recommendations for further consideration. Important progress has been made, however there is more work to be done to drive reforms to legislation, policy, practice and the delivery of services. We have a way forward that is being guided by the lived experiences and expertise of people with lived experience of forced adoption, the community services sector and peer-support groups across Western Australia (WA).

This Government is committed to learning from the important work of the Inquiry, to healing past hurts and to supporting individuals and their families impacted by forced adoption.



## Key dates

### related to the Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices

- 15 November **2022** | Petition calling for a parliamentary inquiry into forced adoption is tabled in the Legislative Council
- 22 February **2023** | Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices commenced
- 22 August **2024** | Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives: Report on the Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption in Western Australia is tabled
- 22 October **2024** | Government Response to Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives: Report on the Inquiry into Past Forced Adoption in Western Australia is tabled  
Expression of interest for the WA Forced Adoption Reference Group opened
- 13 June **2025** | Inaugural meeting of the WA Forced Adoption Reference Group
- 29 August **2025** | Second meeting of the WA Forced Adoption Reference Group
- 22 October **2025** | First annual report on the implementation of the Government Response is released

## Our approach

The Government has responsibility for implementing 36 recommendations of the 39 recommendations contained in Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives. The remaining three recommendations are directed to private organisations and institutions with historic involvement in forced adoption in Western Australia.

The Government responded to the recommendations according to the following position definitions:

Position	Definition
<b>Supported</b>	The Government supports the recommendation in full.
<b>Supported in principle</b>	The Government agrees with the overall policy intent of the recommendation but may undertake additional work to inform implementation.
<b>Further consideration</b>	Further work is required for the Government to agree on a position regarding the recommendation.
<b>Noted</b>	The recommendation does not fall within the Western Australian Government's jurisdiction (e.g. the recommendation relates to a non-government body).
<b>Not supported</b>	The recommendation is not supported by the Government.

The implementation of supported and supported in principle recommendations requires the sustained collaboration of multiple government agencies including the departments of Communities, Justice, Health and the Mental Health Commission through the Forced Adoption Interagency Implementation Working Group. Collaborative partnership with organisations and institutions with historic involvement in forced adoption is a central aspect of coordinating a shared vision for lasting change.

Western Australia also contributes to change at a national level through the Children and Community Services Ministers Forced Adoption Working Group (CSMFAWG). The work of the CSMFAWG strongly aligns with the vision and objectives of the Government to improve outcomes for mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families who are impacted by forced adoption.



Image: Coordinating mechanisms at Commonwealth, State Government and community sector levels



## Engaging with people with lived experience

People with lived experience are the experts in their own lives. Mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families who have directly experienced forced adoption provide valuable insights, knowledge and experience about the legislation, policies, practices and services that impact their daily lives. Every experience shared helps government develop an understanding of the systems and services that are required to best support healing.

As an immediate response to Recommendation 39, the Government established the Western Australian Forced Adoption Reference Group (the Reference Group) to embed lived experience expertise and knowledge into the timely implementation of supported

recommendations of the Government Response. The Reference Group has an important role in contributing to the future of adoption reform in WA through consultation on the implementation of recommendations 4, 5, 8, 17 and 19 and other supported recommendations that impact people with lived experience.

Establishment of the Reference Group provides a landmark opportunity for Government to hear first-hand the experiences of people directly impacted by forced adoption and to use these experiences to shape decision making now and into the future.

Our commitment to embedding the lived experience of people impacted by forced adoption is grounded in a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach. This approach promotes physical, psychological and emotional safety and emphasises the importance of supporting people to feel empowered.

There are five foundational principles that guide our approach to working with people with lived experience:

- **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.
- **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.

In addition to the Reference Group, there will be alternative opportunities for people with lived experience of forced adoption in Western Australia to have their say on proposed reforms. Harnessing a diversity of experience, perspective and expertise will ensure that change is meaningful and reflects the needs and aspirations of people impacted by forced adoption.

## Timeframes

The implementation of the recommendations will be progressed by the Government over several years. Within the first year of implementation, efforts have been focused on 19 recommendations supported or supported in principle.

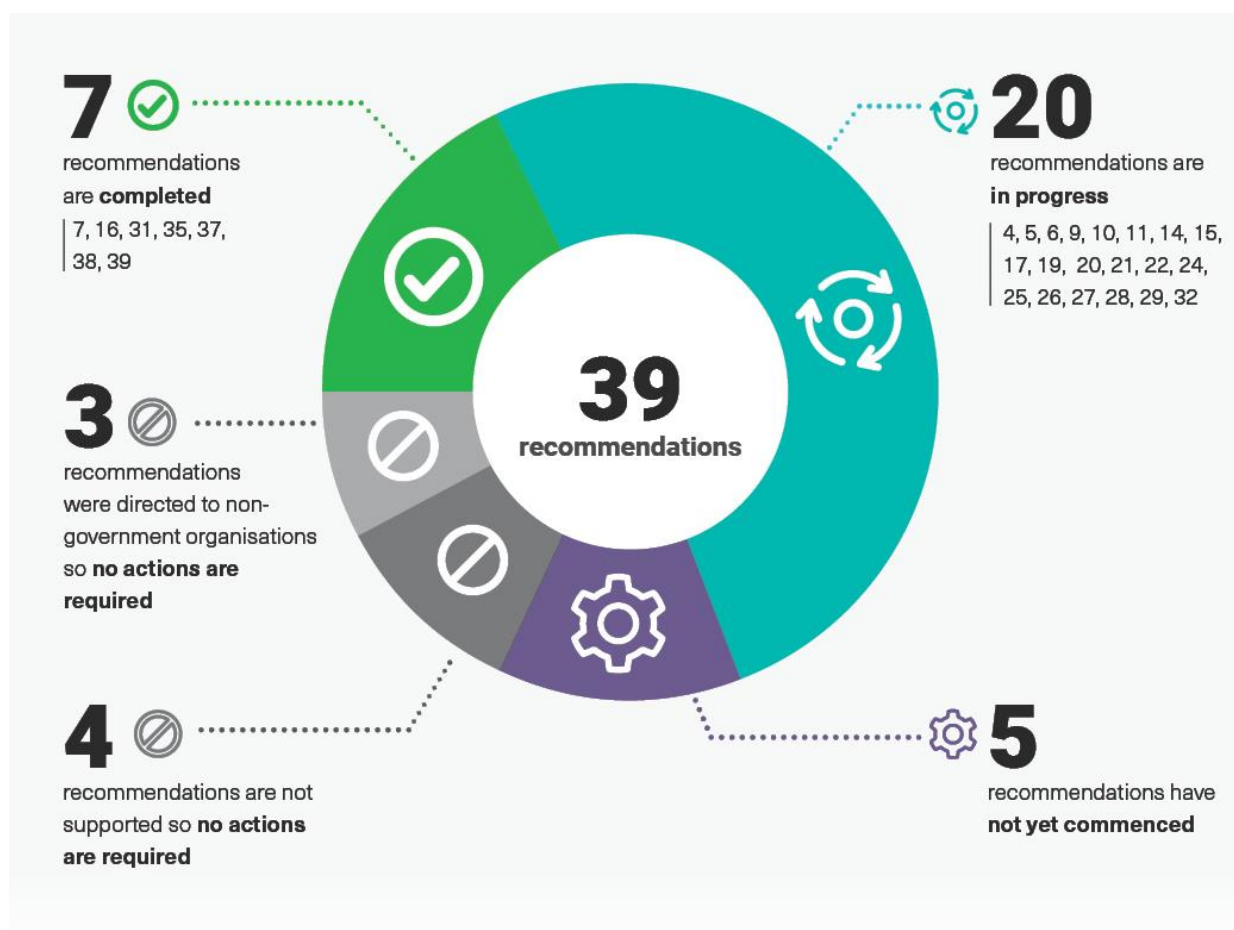
Immediate actions	Short-term action	Recommendations for further consideration
Implementation commenced October 2024 for completion as soon as possible.	Implementation from October 2024 with longer time frames for completion.	Activities will be undertaken by agencies to support Government to develop an agreed position.
<p>These recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>were supported in the Government Response</li> <li>could be implemented by agencies as part of business improvements</li> <li>may have already been in progress as part of existing Government priorities or strategies</li> <li>did not require legislative changes</li> <li>required minimal policy changes.</li> </ul> <p>Importantly, Report 66 provided clear information on the views of people with lived experience regarding these recommendations. Therefore, extensive additional consultation was not required.</p>	<p>These recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>were supported or supported in principle in the Government Response</li> <li>require input from people with lived experience</li> <li>rely on input from multiple stakeholder groups and government agencies</li> <li>may require legislative changes</li> <li>may require additional funding.</li> </ul>	<p>These recommendations may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>require significant consultation or community engagement</li> <li>not have current WA policy settings or are outside current policy settings</li> <li>have multiple dependencies to implementation</li> <li>require legislative changes</li> <li>require additional funding</li> <li>involve significant reforms.</li> </ul>
<b>Total recommendations: 10</b>	<b>Total recommendations: 9</b>	<b>Total recommendations: 14</b>
Recommendations: 4, 7, 9, 16, 24, 31, 35, 37, 38, 39.	Recommendations: 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 25.	Recommendations: 10, 12, 13, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32.

## Summary of progress to date

The implementation of the recommendations will be progressed by the Government over several years. Within the first year of implementation, efforts have been focused on 19 recommendations supported or supported in principle.

An update on activities and progress for each of the 39 recommendations is provided in the Implementation update 2024-25 table on pages 16-41 of this report.

In summary:



## Recommendations requiring further consideration

Of the 36 recommendations directed to the Government in Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives, 14 recommendations were deemed to require further consideration in the Government Response. This was owing to the need for fulsome consideration of the range of legislative, policy and practice considerations.

Following a review of recommendations 26, 27, 28 and 29 regarding the repeal of contact vetoes, the Government has finalised its position and supports these recommendations. The Government recognises that contact vetoes are a sensitive issue for many people and that there are differing views in the community about these proposed reforms. The decision to support recommendations 26, 27, 28 and 29 is based on the majority of submissions to the Parliamentary Inquiry from people with lived experience and service providers who advocated for these changes, the support of the Reference Group who were consulted on the implications of the reforms and the similar approaches taken by other Australian jurisdictions.

The implementation of recommendations 26, 27, 28 and 29 will be included in a proposed suite of amendments to the *Adoption Act 1994*. People impacted by the reforms will be provided referrals to specialised counselling services to support them through the transition.

Recommendation 10 contained 13 parts focused on improving access to information and records relating to adoption. Nine parts of the recommendation were supported in principle. The Department of Communities has progressed implementation of these nine parts. One part was noted, as it is already provided for within the *Adoption Act 1994*. Three parts remained for further consideration and focused on moving adoption records out of the Department of Communities. Following further consideration and consultation with the Reference Group, the Government does not support parts 1, 2 and 4 of this recommendation requiring introduction of a separate act to deal with access to information and records relating to adoption and a standalone unit responsible for managing adoption information in the Department of Justice. The improvements being applied by the Department of Communities through the implementation of Recommendation 10 parts 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 as well as the implementation of recommendations 14 and 17 will ensure improved access to information and adoption records. Recommendation 10 will now be classified as supported in principle except for parts 1, 2 and 4.

Support for these recommendations increases the number of recommendations supported or supported in principle by Government from 19 to 24.



Support for these recommendations increases the number of **recommendations supported or supported in principle** by Government from

19 to **24**

Recommendation 18 suggested the Government make arrangements to ensure that the services of access to adoption records and information, and search, contact, genealogy and mediation services are provided by a standalone unit that is not within the Department of Communities. Following further consideration, the Government does not support this recommendation. The actions implemented arising from Recommendations 4, 10, 14 and 17 will lead to significant changes and improvements to processes and services surrounding access to adoption records. Adoption records will remain with the Department of Communities whose staff currently receive tailored training and education and hold relevant professional qualifications and subject matter expertise to facilitate access to information and records.

The Reference Group was also consulted on Recommendation 18 and agreed that adoption records should remain with the Department of Communities to enable the crucial improvements to access adoption records and information to be prioritised and implemented immediately. The Reference Group will provide advice on:

- devising better procedures for interacting with forced adoption clients (Recommendation 4)
- the access to and release of records (Recommendation 10)
- improvements to access information and search contact and genealogy services within the Department of Communities (Recommendation 18).

Finalising Recommendation 18 increases the number of recommendations not supported by Government from 3 to 4.

The changes in the status of these recommendations have been reflected in the Implementation update 2024-25 table on pages 16-41.

Eight recommendations remain for further consideration. In the last year, policy work has been progressed on four of these.

Redress remains a key priority for people directly impacted by forced adoption as it signifies an important step in the recognition of historic harms. Initial policy work has been developed and is under consideration by Government.

## **Next steps for implementation**

Addressing the longstanding impacts of forced adoption requires a sustained whole of government and community commitment to understand, acknowledge and address the needs of mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families. The WA Government is committed to work with people with lived experience and subject matter expertise to achieve this shared goal.

The next year of implementation will have a strong focus on designing and developing specialised counselling, support and genealogy services; progressing legislative amendments to the *Adoption Act 1994*; building on improvements to access adoption records and information; and continuation of efforts to improve community education, awareness raising and recognition.



## Implementation update 2024-25



Completed



In progress





Not yet commenced





No further action



Recommendation	Government position	Lead agency	Update 2024-25	Status
<b>Recommendation 1</b> Ngala commit to participating in a redress scheme in recognition of their involvement in past forced adoption.	Noted	Ngala	The Government notes this recommendation is directed to Ngala for consideration.  Links to recommendations 20, 21 and 22 under further consideration by Government.	No update
<b>Recommendation 2</b> The Salvation Army commit to participating in a redress scheme in recognition of their involvement in past forced adoption in WA.	Noted	Salvation Army	The Government notes this recommendation is directed to the Salvation Army for consideration.  Links to recommendations 20, 21 and 22 under further consideration by Government.	No update
<b>Recommendation 3</b> Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea commit to participating in a redress scheme in recognition of their involvement in past forced adoption in WA.	Noted	Sisters of Mercy	The Government notes this recommendation is directed to the Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea for consideration.  Links to recommendations 20, 21 and 22 under further consideration by Government.	No update




<p><b>Recommendation 4</b> The WA Government consult with support service providers and people affected by forced adoption to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the quality and dissemination of information on available mental health supports</li> <li>• devise better internal procedures for interacting with forced adoption clients, and for connecting people to relevant supports and following up</li> <li>• increase referrals to external support services.</li> </ul>	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>The Department of Communities (Communities) revised its information sheet on available mental health supports for people impacted by forced adoption which is provided to people seeking services from the Post Adoption Services team. Information about available mental health supports has also been updated on the Adoptions Services webpage.</p> <p>Communities has reviewed and improved internal practices for interacting with forced adoption clients, and for connecting people to relevant supports. Communities will work with the Reference Group and service providers in the next year to seek feedback on changes made to date and identify any further enhancements.</p> <p>Communities has enhanced its Adoption Information System database to record the number and types of referrals being made to external counselling and support services to improve data capture about referrals.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b> The Minister for Health and Mental Health consult with people impacted by forced adoption in Western Australia and professional representative bodies to commission informed development of:</p>	Supported in principle	Department of Health / Mental Health Commission	<p>The Department of Health has completed an interjurisdictional scan of trauma-informed capabilities training, resources and services across Australia and has begun compilation of an evidence-based list of competencies required for a mental health practitioner to work in the field of forced adoption.</p>	

<p>1) criteria for establishing a mental health practitioner as a specialist in treating trauma in the forced adoption space</p> <p>2) a public register of WA professionals who meet these criteria and their contact details</p> <p>3) a means for inviting relevant WA professionals to register</p> <p>4) a system for assessing applications</p> <p>5) a system for maintaining, updating, and advertising the register</p> <p>6) a strategy to quickly grow the number of professionals eligible for the register</p> <p>7) a plan for periodic review and revision of this arrangement, including through consulting with people with lived experience of forced adoption.</p>			<p>Ongoing consultation is occurring with stakeholders across the WA health system to understand the local context and relevant initiatives, including with the Women and Newborn Health Service, the Mental Health Commission and Communities.</p> <p>The recommendation will be supported by the Mental Health Commission's Trauma Informed Guide (in development) which aims to provide a shared understanding of a trauma-informed approach across Western Australian State Government departments and authorities.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 6</b> The Minister for Health and Mental Health:</p> <p>1) consult with relevant stakeholders to develop and implement a strategy for promoting the Australian Psychological Society's forced</p>	Supported	Department of Health / Mental Health Commission	Department of Health staff involved with the delivery of this recommendation have completed the foundational course provided by the Australian Psychological Association to support their understanding of forced adoption practices in Australia, the impacts of these practices on mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families, and	


<p>adoption training package for psychologists and general practitioners within WA</p> <p>2) connect WA health professionals to their network counterparts working in this space.</p>			<p>possible assessment and treatment options to support people impacted by forced adoption.</p> <p>The Department of Health is liaising with the Australian Psychological Society to understand how best to increase access to the training package with allied health, mental health and general practitioners working in the forced adoption professional context across WA.</p> <p>This will inform a high-level communication strategy to be developed by the Mental Health Commission, including promotion of the training to funded services and key stakeholders.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>The Minister for Community Services tie future funding for forced adoption counselling services to:</p> <p>1) qualified practitioners completing training and development relating to forced adoption</p> <p>2) the provision of evidence-based approaches to treating complex trauma</p>	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>Communities has completed internal work to tie future funding to services that demonstrate the criteria set out in this recommendation.</p>	

3) ongoing clinical supervision from qualified professionals specialised in trauma.				
<b>Recommendation 8</b> The Minister for Health and Mental Health commence a dialogue with those with lived experience of forced adoption, service providers and the university sector to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) establish a post-graduate qualification in treating forced adoption traumas</li> <li>2) establish research projects into relevant topics, such as health and mental health impacts, data collection and data linkage</li> <li>3) incentivise study and research in this area through the provision of scholarships.</li> </ul>	Supported in principle	Department of Health / Mental Health Commission	Scoping of this recommendation is yet to commence as it will be informed by the work progressing on recommendations 5 and 6.	
<b>Recommendation 9</b> The WA Government develop an accessible online resource that is clear, comprehensive, and up to date – providing advice identifying the existing collections of records relevant to forced adoption, where they are held and how the records can be accessed.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has commenced work on the development of a publication, which will provide an index of adoption records held by Communities and organisations and institutions with historic involvement in forced adoption. Once finalised, the publication will be provided to anyone applying for Post	




			Adoption Services and made available on the Adoptions Services webpage.	
<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>3) A clear object under the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> to ensure those affected by adoption have access to information about themselves and their lives, including their early care and their medical needs.</p> <p>5) Records currently held by entities or institutions which previously provided adoption services be provided to the unit dealing with applications under the scheme.</p> <p>6) Records from the Department of Communities be reviewed, catalogued, and digitised as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>7) Applications under the scheme provide for access to information and records about the adoption itself, and also about the early life of an adopted person. This includes medical records.</p> <p>8) Applications provide for access to medical information relevant to the</p>	<p>Supported in principle 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12</p>	<p>Department of Communities</p>	<p>Recommendation 10 contained 13 parts focused on improving access to information and records relating to adoption. Nine parts of the recommendation were supported in principle and Communities has progressed implementation of these parts.</p> <p>As part of proposed legislative amendments to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>, Communities will include a clear object within the Act to ensure that people impacted by adoption, including historic forced adoption, have access to information about themselves and their lives, including their early care and medical needs (Recommendation 10(3)).</p> <p>Communities is continuing to work with organisations and institutions with historic involvement in forced adoption to obtain access to adoption-related records for the purpose of improving access to records for eligible parties. It is at the discretion of organisations and institutions to provide adoption-related records to Communities (Recommendation 10(5)).</p> <p>Communities has commenced a comprehensive project to scope the approach of cataloguing and digitising records held by Communities to improve the</p>	


<p>health of an adopted person or their descendants.</p> <p>9) Redaction only be used to the minimum extent necessary.</p> <p>10) Summaries or extracts not be provided to applicants.</p> <p>11) Applicants be provided with a list or index of records that exist, and information as to what has been provided, what has not, and the reasons for this.</p> <p>12) There be clear and legislated pathways for internal and external review of decisions made regarding access.</p>			<p>timeliness of requests to access records, the quality of records being provided and to ensure appropriate preservation methods (Recommendation 10(6)).</p> <p>Through the Minister for Child Protection, Communities will amend the <i>Adoption Regulations 1995</i> to improve access to records relevant to an adoption from the Family Court. Communities has also updated and digitised its Application for Post Adoption Services to improve user accessibility, reduce and streamline wait-times to access records, and embed trauma-informed language. The revised Application for Post Adoption Services is now accessible on the Adoptions Services webpage. Communities will continue to receive hard-copy application forms as per the needs of the applicant (Recommendation 10(7)).</p> <p>Communities staff advise applicants how to apply for their medical records through the Freedom of Information processes of the relevant institutions that hold the records and the potential support their GP can provide in this process. This part is complete (Recommendation 10(8)).</p> <p>Communities ensure redaction is only used to the minimum extent necessary. This part is complete (Recommendation 10(9)).</p>	
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			<p>Communities has revised its non-identification letter to ensure that summaries and extracts of records are no longer provided to applicants. Communities will continue to offer a supported release of records to all applicants to ensure people have choice and agency about how they receive their records. This part is complete (Recommendation 10(10)).</p> <p>As per Recommendation 9, Communities has commenced work on the redevelopment of a publication, which provides an index of adoption records held by Communities and organisations and institutions with historic involvement in forced adoption. Once finalised, the publication will be provided to anyone applying for Post Adoption Services. The revised non-identification letter provides applicants with a list of available records being provided to them and information about why some records cannot be provided due to eligibility criteria within the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> (Recommendation 10(11)).</p> <p>The <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> provides legislated pathways for internal and external reviews of decisions, including decisions regarding access to adoption records and information. Where any person is aggrieved by a decision made by Communities, that person may apply to the Director General of Communities to review the decision. Where</p>	
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			a person is unsatisfied with the outcome of that review, they may apply to the State Administrative Tribunal for a review of the Director General's decision. Communities respects the right of any person who is dissatisfied about a service to make a formal complaint through Communities' Complaints Management Unit. Communities has made this information publicly available on the Adoptions Services webpage to improve public awareness. This part is complete (Recommendation 10(12)).	
<b>Recommendation 10 (continued)</b> 1) A separate act dealing with access to information and records relating to adoption. 2) Applications to access information and records under the scheme be managed by a standalone unit responsible for managing adoption information within the Department of Justice.  4) Records currently held by the Department of Communities relating to forced adoptions be transferred to the unit dealing with applications under the scheme.	Not supported	Department of Communities	Following further consideration, the Government does not support parts 1,2 and 4 of this recommendation. The Government will not be introducing a separate Act to deal with access to information and records relating to adoption or a standalone unit responsible for managing adoption information in the Department of Justice. The Government notes the improvements being applied for accessing information by Communities through the implementation of Recommendation 10 parts 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 as well as recommendations 14 and 17.  Adoption records will remain with the Communities whose staff currently receive tailored training and education and hold relevant professional qualifications and	







			subject matter expertise to facilitate access to information and records.	
<b>Recommendation 10 (continued)</b> 13) The new scheme include a provision equivalent to section 83 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994 (WA)</i> . Where there is an existing court order under section 83 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994 (WA)</i> , that order be converted to apply to the new scheme.	Noted		The Government notes aspect 13 of the recommendation, as this provision is already provided for in the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> . This part is complete.	
<b>Recommendation 11</b> The WA Government urgently implement integrated birth certificates, to be issued to eligible people upon request, and that they be legal proof of identity of equal status to other birth certificates.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities in partnership with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has drafted a proposed policy and legislative amendments to support the introduction of integrated birth certificates in WA. Legislative reforms to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> and the <i>Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1998</i> are required to facilitate the introduction of integrated birth certificates.	
<b>Recommendation 12</b> The Attorney General liaise with the Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages to implement a specific process for the names of fathers to be added to the birth certificates of children who were subsequently adopted and for whom fathers' identities were not originally recorded. This process should be responsive to the needs of people affected by forced	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	Section 19 of the <i>Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1998</i> currently facilitates a process through the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages WA to amend the birth registration information of an adopted person to include information regarding biological paternity following acceptance of DNA evidence from organisations accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities.	

<p>adoption, including in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not assume fathers will be alive, located within Australia, literate, or without other impediments to providing sworn evidence in writing</li> <li>• not assume applicants will have support from or any relationship with the father, or other family members</li> <li>• not assume fathers will be listed on other documents relating to the adoption of the child</li> <li>• any application fees be waived</li> <li>• the cost for any DNA test required not be borne by the applicant.</li> </ul>			<p>Further government consideration of this recommendation is required due to complexities relating to confirming parentage in the absence of available records, in circumstances where the father is deceased, or the family of the father are not aware of or do not support an application.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 13</b> The WA Government implement integrated death certificates, to be issued to eligible people upon request, and that they have equal legal status to other death certificates.</p>	<p>Further consideration required</p>	<p>Department of Justice</p>	<p>The Government anticipates that significant policy development will be required to scope consideration of this recommendation, noting that integrated death certificates are not currently implemented by any Australian jurisdiction. Further consideration of integrated death certificates will take into consideration the legislative, policy and practice learnings from the introduction of Integrated Birth Certificates.</p>	




<p><b>Recommendation 14</b> The Minister for Community Services direct the Department of Communities to consult with relevant adoption search, contact and genealogy service providers to devise and action steps for improving access to records necessary to identify key family.</p>	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>Communities has undertaken consultation with local search, contact and genealogy service providers to establish the current service landscape and opportunities for increasing specialised services to people impacted by forced adoption.</p> <p>Communities has developed a webpage on available genealogy and family history services to support people impacted by forced adoption to search and locate records and information about themselves and their families. This information on genealogy services is published on the Adoptions Services webpage.</p> <p>Following consultation with the Reference Group, Communities will undertake a fulsome commissioning and procurement process to provide dedicated search, contact and genealogy services to the forced adoption community.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 15</b> The WA Government introduce an amendment bill repealing provisions relating to contact and mediation licenses in the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>.</p>	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>Legislative amendments to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> are required to repeal provisions relating to contact and mediation licenses.</p> <p>As an interim response to meet current service demand, Communities has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revised its internal application process to enable more contact and mediation licenses to be granted</li> </ul>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developed a comprehensive training package to support new contact and mediation licensees to confidently deliver services that meet legislated requirements and achieve improved outcomes for clients.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recommendation 16</b></p> <p>The Minister for Community Services direct the Department of Communities to review their internal practice on search and contact to ensure that people affected by past forced adoption receive clear and simple information, orally as well as in writing, about all relevant matters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what supports exist and why using them may be beneficial</li> <li>what support services are provided by the relevant authority</li> <li>the roles of public servants who provide which support services and the qualifications relevant to those roles</li> <li>who is eligible and ineligible for support services provided by the relevant authority and on what bases</li> </ul>	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>Communities has undertaken a comprehensive review of its internal practices, procedures and guidelines on search and contact and has revised all relevant templates to ensure that people impacted by forced adoption receive clear, simple, and consistent information relevant to accessing counselling and support services. The updates to internal practices, procedures and guidelines includes improvements to the information being provided to people orally and in writing.</p> <p>Communities has developed a resource to provide people with information about the services provided by the Post Adoption Services team including the roles, qualifications, training and responsibilities of the team and the service approach. Following consultation with the Reference Group, Communities has published the About Us information sheet on the Adoptions Services webpage.</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what support services are provided externally</li> <li>• how to access those external services</li> <li>• whether those external services are free or charge fees.</li> </ul>			Communities will work with the Reference Group and service providers in the next year to seek feedback on changes made to date and identify any further enhancements.	
<b>Recommendation 17</b> The WA Government consult with lived experience stakeholders and identified support service providers to develop and implement a plan for services to meet the needs of people impacted by forced adoption in Western Australia in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental health support</li> <li>• access to adoption records and information</li> <li>• search, contact, genealogy and mediation services.</li> </ul>	Supported	Department of Communities	The development of a plan for mental health support services, access to adoption records and information and search, contact, genealogy and mediation services will be progressed through the Reference Group for consultation.	
<b>Recommendation 18</b> The WA Government make arrangements to ensure that the services of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access to adoption records and information and</li> <li>• search, contact, genealogy and mediation services</li> </ul>	Not supported	Department of Communities	<p>Following further consideration, the Government does not support this recommendation. The Government will not be introducing a standalone unit that is not within the Department of Communities.</p> <p>The Government notes the improvements to access to adoption records and information being applied by Communities through the</p>	



are provided by a standalone unit that is not within the Department of Communities.			<p>implementation of recommendations parts 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 as well as recommendations 14 and 17.</p> <p>Communities will continue to seek advice from the Reference Group in improving access to records, information and services as per recommendations 4, 14 and 17.</p>	
<b>Recommendation 19</b> The WA Government consult with lived experience stakeholders to develop and implement a strategy for raising public awareness of forced adoption, including staff training, the gathering of health-related information, online information, and the development of any other relevant resources.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has completed preliminary work to inform the development of a strategy to raise public awareness of the history and impacts of forced adoption. The development of an awareness raising strategy is being progressed through the Reference Group for consultation.	
<b>Recommendation 20</b> The WA Government establish a redress scheme for those directly affected by past forced adoption in WA, comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a monetary payment</li> <li>• counselling and psychological support</li> <li>• a direct personal apology from involved institutions and organisations.</li> </ul>	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	<p>The Government acknowledges that for many people who have experienced a forced adoption, redress signifies an important step in the formal recognition of their experience, to hold responsible institutions to account, and to support healing.</p> <p>The Department of Justice has undertaken detailed policy work on the recommended redress scheme for Government consideration.</p>	



<p>The following principles guide the scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the eligibility criteria include mothers whose babies were forcibly removed, children forcibly removed from their mothers, and in some circumstances fathers of children forcibly removed</li><li>• the evidentiary threshold be ‘reasonable likelihood’ that the child was forcibly separated from its mother or parents</li><li>• the process streamlined and applicants given choice between the scheme’s components</li><li>• fixed sum payments through the scheme that does not discriminate between the specific circumstances of different applicants or the eligibility classes</li><li>• lifelong individual and family counselling by therapist of choice</li><li>• applicants not precluded from accessing the scheme if they have made a civil claim</li></ul>				
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the scheme be administered by a standalone unit not within the Department of Communities.</li> </ul>				
<b>Recommendation 21</b> The Attorney General liaise with those institutions and organisations involved in past forced adoption, and secure their commitment to a redress scheme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partial reimbursement for redress payments and/or counselling provided to recipients</li> <li>participation in an apology process.</li> </ul>	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	The Government recognises the importance to people with lived experience of forced adoption to receive formal acknowledgement from institutions and organisations of the harm and trauma caused by historic forced adoption policies and practices.  Implementation of this recommendation will be progressed in conjunction with Recommendation 20 and further consideration is required, noting that a number of the non-government institutions are currently defunct.	
<b>Recommendation 22</b> The WA Government establish and fund a legal advice and referral service for ensuring those affected by forced adoption are able to receive free, independent legal advice about their options for accessing a redress scheme.	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	Implementation of this recommendation will be progressed in conjunction with Recommendation 20 and will be subject to further Government consideration.	
<b>Recommendation 23</b> The Attorney General introduce legislation similar to the <i>Civil Liability Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Act 2018 (WA)</i> amending the	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	The Government recognises that historic adoption policies and practices have resulted in longstanding injustices for mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families.	





<i>Civil Liability Act 2002 (WA)</i> and the <i>Limitation Act 2004 (WA)</i> to remove limitations on claims relating to forced adoption.			<p>Consideration of this recommendation requires significant policy work and consultation noting that no other jurisdiction has lifted the statute of limitations in relation to forced adoption claims.</p> <p>The Government will consider reforms to statutory limitation periods in conjunction with a broader package of legislative reforms, including consideration of the outcomes of the Victorian approach to reforming statutory limitation periods for historic forced adoption.</p>	
<b>Recommendation 24</b> The Minister for Community Services direct the Department of Communities to contact individuals who entered into an undertaking about contact vetoes prior to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> 2012 decriminalisation amendments and provide updated information.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has commenced a project to identify all parties who entered into an undertaking about contact vetoes and those who have lodged a contact veto prior to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> amendments that decriminalised contact vetoes. Once all parties have been identified, Communities will seek to contact all parties to provide them with updated written information about the decriminalisation amendments.	
<b>Recommendation 25</b> The WA Government introduce an amendment bill repealing section 108 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> .	Supported	Department of Communities	As an interim response to meet current service demand, Communities has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>revised its internal application process to enable more contact and mediation licenses to be granted</li> </ul>	



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developed a comprehensive training package to support new contact and mediation licensees to confidently deliver services that meet legislated requirements and achieve improved outcomes for clients.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommendation 26</b> The WA Government introduce an amendment bill to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repeal section 103 and 82(4)(c) of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i></li> <li>amend section 82(4)(b) by deleting “83(2); and” and inserting instead - “83(2).”</li> <li>amend section 100(3) to remove the reference to section 103.</li> </ul>	Supported	Department of Communities	After fulsome consideration of the findings of Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives and submissions to the Inquiry, the Government supports Recommendation 26. Legislative amendments to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> are required to repeal and amend these provisions. Communities will also work with contact and mediation licensees to inform them of the changes.	
<b>Recommendation 27</b> The WA Government introduce a bill amending the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> to convert existing contact vetoes into ‘Statements of objection to contact’ and place on a register.	Supported	Department of Communities	After fulsome consideration of the findings of Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives and submissions to the Inquiry, the Government supports Recommendation 27 to introduce an amendment bill to convert existing contact vetoes into Statements of objection to contact. Following legislative amendments to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> , Communities will contact parties impacted by contact vetoes to provide them with written information regarding the legislative amendments and referrals to specialised	



			counselling and support services. Communities will also work with contact and mediation licensees to inform them of the changes.	
<b>Recommendation 28</b> The Attorney General introduce a bill repealing section 100 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> and providing for contact vetoes to no longer have an effect after 12 months of the amendments coming into operation.	Supported	Department of Communities	<p>After fulsome consideration of the findings of Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives and submissions to the Inquiry, the Government supports Recommendation 28 to introduce a bill repealing section 100 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>. Contact vetoes will not have an effect after 12 months of the amendments coming into operation. As part of this transition, Communities will seek to contact all parties impacted by contact vetoes to provide them with written information regarding the legislative amendments and referrals to specialised counselling and support services.</p> <p>As the Minister responsible for the administration of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>, the Minister for Child Protection will oversee the implementation of this recommendation. Communities will also work with contact and mediation licensees to inform them of the changes.</p>	
<b>Recommendation 29</b> Prior to the date for contact vetoes ceasing to have an effect, the Department of Communities (Post Adoption Services) is to contact every	Supported	Department of Communities	Following fulsome consideration of the findings of Report 66 – Broken Bonds, Fractured Lives and submissions to the Inquiry, the Government supports Recommendation 29 to contact every	

individual who holds a contact veto under the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> and is to provide them with information regarding the amendments and details for services available to provide them with counselling and support.			individual who holds a contact veto or is impacted by a contact veto to provide them with information regarding the amendments and referrals to specialised counselling and support services.	
<b>Recommendation 30</b> The Attorney General introduce amendments to relevant legislation to ensure that civil litigation on matters of past forced adoption (including those brought under any legislative changes resulting from Recommendation 23) can continue by the estate of the plaintiff.	Further consideration required	Department of Justice	The Government recognises that historic adoption policies and practices have resulted in longstanding injustices for mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families.  The Government will consider this recommendation in conjunction with Recommendation 23.	
<b>Recommendation 31</b> The Attorney General direct the Department of Justice to provide clear and current information about discharging an adoption and the forms required. This information be included on the Family Court of Western Australia website.	Supported	Department of Justice	Information about discharging an adoption has been added to the Family Court of WA website.  Communities has also developed guidance on the process, requirements and implications of discharging an adoption order. The information is available on the Adoptions Services webpage.	
<b>Recommendation 32</b> The Attorney General introduce a bill amending section 124 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> removing relatives under (1)(e) from the classes of persons	Further consideration required	Department of Communities	The Government will consider this recommendation as part of future reforms to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> . As the department assisting the Minister for Child Protection in the administration of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> ,	

whose identities are protected by that offence.			Recommendation 32 will be considered by Communities.	
<b>Recommendation 33</b>  The Attorney General introduce a bill repealing section 126 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> .	Not supported	Department of Communities	Section 126 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> provides protection to a party to an adoption or a proposed adoption, or a relative of a party to an adoption or proposed adoption, against harassment, intimidation, embarrassment or ridicule from another person by reason of the adoption or proposed adoption. Section 126 applies to all historic and modern adoptions.  Section 126 provides important protection to parties to an adoption or proposed adoption who, by their own choosing, do not wish to have contact. It also safeguards children and young people from exposure to acts that could cause harm to their physical or psychological safety and wellbeing and therefore the Government does not support Recommendation 33. As the department assisting the Minister for Child Protection in the administration of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> , Recommendation 33 was considered by Communities.	
<b>Recommendation 34</b>  The Attorney General introduce a bill repealing section 127 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> .	Not supported	Department of Communities	Section 127 of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> relates to the privacy and confidentiality of parties to an adoption or proposed adoption. It applies to all historic and modern adoptions and reflects confidentiality provisions in the adoption legislation of all other Australian	

			<p>jurisdictions. Similar provisions are found in other human services legislation.</p> <p>Subject to a number of exceptions, section 127 restricts a person from recording, using, disclosing or communicating information contained in any document held by the Minister, Communities and certain others relating to an adoption or proposed adoption, an adoption services, the parties to an adoption or proposed adoption, an adoption plan in relation to an adopted person or prospective adopted person, or mediation between the parties to an adoption or proposed adoption, or the discharge of an adoption order.</p> <p>Repeal of section 127 would create a significant risk to an individual's right to confidentiality and privacy, particularly in circumstances where a party to an adoption or proposed adoption does not wish to be publicly named or contacted. Repeal of section 127 poses particular risk to the safeguarding of confidentiality of children and young people who are a party to a modern adoption and therefore the Government does not support Recommendation 34. As the department assisting the Minister for Child Protection in the administration of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>,</p>	
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			Recommendation 34 was considered by Communities.	
<b>Recommendation 35</b> The Minister for Community Services direct the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Communities to clarify the circumstances in which the Chief Executive Officer will and will not provide notification under section 80(1) or 80(2) of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> . This includes clarification that a lack of awareness by a party they are adopted, or have a relative who has been adopted does not constitute ‘special circumstances’ for the purposes of section 80(3) of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> .	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has reviewed and updated its Special Circumstances Policy, including clarification that a lack of awareness of an adoption does not constitute special circumstances. Communities has published the Special Circumstances Policy on the Adoptions Services webpage.	
<b>Recommendation 36</b> The WA Government notify all adult adopted persons not already aware of their adopted status.	Not supported	Department of Communities	Communities has implemented a streamlined process for adults who seek to confirm if they are adopted as per Recommendation 37. Communities prioritises applications for adoption records and information services for individuals who discover their adoption in adulthood and provides them with relevant information and referrals to available counselling and support services.  The Government does not support the recommendation to inform all adopted adults of their adoption history due to the potential to cause significant psychological harm and	

			distress to individuals. The Government recognises that this approach may be disappointing for some people with lived experience, particularly late discovery adoptees.	
<b>Recommendation 37</b> The Minister for Community Services direct the Department of Communities (Post Adoption Services) to implement a process for adults to apply for confirmation they are recorded as a party in any adoption in Western Australia.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has developed a new process for adults who seek to confirm if they are adopted. The new process is trauma-informed and streamlined to support the needs of people who discover they are adopted as adults.  To ensure continuous improvement, people using the new process to confirm an adoption will be asked to provide feedback on the process experience to ensure the specific needs of the late discovery adoptees are met.	
<b>Recommendation 38</b> The Minister for Community Services direct the Department of Communities to publish accurate online information about the numbers and kinds of adoptions occurring in the state each year, legislation relevant to adoption, the status of reviews of that legislation and progress on implementing review changes.	Supported	Department of Communities	Communities has collated a range of data on adoption in WA to improve public awareness and transparency about the numbers and types of adoptions occurring in WA each year and the status of legislative reforms to the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i> . The following data has been published on the Adoptions Services webpage and will be updated annually: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of local adoptions</li> <li>• number of intercountry adoptions</li> </ul>	



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of discharges of adoption</li> <li>• number of applications received to access identifying and non-identifying information</li> <li>• number of Communities' facilitated contacts between parties</li> <li>• number of outreach services provided</li> <li>• number of supported releases provided</li> <li>• number of death notifications received</li> <li>• status of legislative reviews of the <i>Adoption Act 1994</i>.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommendation 39</b> The WA Government establish an adoption reference group inclusive of mothers, fathers, adopted people, and First Nations people with lived experience of forced adoption, as well as relevant service providers when appropriate.	Supported	Department of Communities	The Reference Group has been established to provide lived experience expertise and information to the Director General of Communities to inform the implementation of supported recommendations. The Reference Group includes 12 people with direct lived experience of forced adoption, either appointed as individuals or as representatives of three local peer support groups. The Reference Group includes two lived experience Co-Chairs and a Co-Chair from Communities. Members reflect a diverse range of experiences, knowledge, cultural backgrounds and geographical locations to ensure a broad range of perspectives and insights.	