



Collection Notice: Adoption Services

What do we do?

The Department of Communities (Communities) is the only agency in Western Australia that can arrange adoptions.

Within Communities, Adoption Services supports people seeking an adoption. This includes parents considering adoption for their child, people who want to adopt a child born in Western Australia or overseas, relatives wanting to adopt a child who is a family member, carers seeking to adopt the child they have been caring for, stepparents wishing to adopt their stepchild and adults who are seeking to be adopted.

We also provide support and information to people seeking access to information and adoption records through our post-adoption services.

Western Australia's [Adoption Act 1994 \(WA\)](#) supports open adoption. This means recognising the rights of people affected by adoption to have access to information, connection to their cultural heritage, and contact with each other where this is possible.

This Collection Notice covers the personal information collected in connection with Adoption Services, how this information is used, and who we may share it with.

What personal information do we collect and hold?

Considering adoption

Qualified and experienced staff (social workers and psychologists) from Adoption Services will work with parents **considering adoption for their child**. From those opting to proceed, we may collect the following personal information:

- name, date of birth, and gender of the child
- name, address, and consent of the parents
- names, ages, and genders of other family members (for example, siblings)
- reasons for considering adoption
- counselling supports
- social history
- cultural background
- family health
- extent of contact required with the child.

Adoption

From **applicants wishing to adopt** we may collect the following personal information:

- applicant names, dates of birth, and contact details (for example, phone number, email address, and residential address)
- identification documents such as driver's licence or passport
- motivation to adopt
- Working with Children Card Number or application
- National Police History and any traffic offences
- employment details (for example, employer, occupation, etc.)
- education and qualifications
- health and lifestyle details, which may be supplemented with a general practitioner's report or specialist reports (as required)
- residential and environmental information covering the home and neighbourhood, including details of any bodies of water (for example, swimming pool, pond) and associated compliance notices
- personal, social, and family history (including any religious or philosophical beliefs)
- financial information
- professional and personal referee reports.

This information may be collected directly from applicants through an adoption application, assessment interviews, and home visits, or with the applicants' consent from medical practitioners and referees. We may also use personal information which Communities holds or has access to, regarding any Working with Children applications, Child Protection History via Connect for Safety (for applicants previously residing interstate), and Family Court records.

Post-adoption services

In the provision of **post-adoption services**, including access to adoption records, outreach services, Message box services, etc., we may collect the following personal information:

- applicant name, date of birth, gender and contact details
- certified proof of identity documents (such as drivers licence, passport, birth certificate, naturalisation or citizenship certification, bank/credit card, public service ID, etc.)
- proof of relationship documents if you are a relative or descendant
- name and date of birth/age of adopted person, adoptive parents, and birth parents (where known)
- social and medical history
- previous and current contact.

We collect this information directly, as part of the application form.

When can you remain anonymous?

Individuals may choose to remain anonymous when making a general enquiry. However, if all requested information is not received it may limit our ability to provide services, assess support needs, or respond to requests.

Anyone wishing to proceed with an adoption, adopt, or apply for access to adoption records or post-adoption services, must provide full identification details.

How do we use your personal information?

Personal information may be used to:

- commence an adoption process
- develop a profile, which can be shared with prospective families
- assess suitability of prospective parent(s) to adopt
- formalise adoptions through the Family Court of Western Australia (WA)
- establish an Adoption Plan
- provide post-adoption services to support the adopted person and their new family
- assist with access to adoption records
- assist with contact and mediation between parties wanting to connect
- provide an intermediary message service between parties to an adoption.

We may also use this information to:

- conduct analyses to monitor and improve service delivery
- prepare ministerial reports, briefings, or advice provided to the Minister for the relevant portfolio as per our statutory functions and ministerial accountability obligations
- support internal audit activities and external audit functions under the *Auditor General Act 2006* (WA)
- notify Ombudsman WA of investigations, complaints, or reviews of administrative action under the *Parliamentary Commissioner act 1971* (WA).

Who do we share information with?

Any information shared will only be done so in line with the [Adoption Act 1994](#) and other relevant legislation.

We may share your personal information with:

- family
- prospective adoptive families (such as profiles of children for adoption).
- medical panels (general practitioner reports of adoptive parents as part of the assessment process)
- Adoption Committee members (independent) (including recommendations on the suitability to adopt and supporting evidence)
- adoptive families and children (details of parents, cultural background, and family medical history, etc. in line with open adoption policy)
- Family Court of WA (to formalise each adoption)
- Department of Social Services (for example, reports)
- Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages along with any parents and siblings (the death of an adopted person)
- Counselling and support services for any referrals consented to. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Adoption Research and Counselling Service (support, education, research for those living with adoption/separation from family).
 - Forced Adoption Support Services and Relationships Australia (for those affected in any way by forced adoption).
 - ARMS WA (for women who have lost a child to adoption).
 - Adoption Support for Families and Children Inc. (support group).

Any messages exchanged via the Message Inbox service will only be shared with the addressee.

For **intercountry adoptions** (that is, people adopted in WA but born overseas), we will share information with the intercountry liaison in the equivalent authorities in the country of origin.

All Australian intercountry adoptions must follow the principles of the [Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption](#) (Hague Convention). Australia also has intercountry adoption partnerships and relationships with countries that follow the principles of the Hague Convention but are not signatories to it (refer to [Department of Social Services \(the Australian Central Authority\)](#) for details).

The principles include ensuring consent is obtained where applicable, the preservation of all information from the time the child enters the child protection system and ensuring the child's access to their information (under appropriate guidance and as permitted by law).

Details of each Intercountry adoption (such as the name and date of birth of the child and adoptive parents) are also required to be sent to the Minister for Home Affairs, Australia.

We may also share information:

- within Communities for the provision of related services
- to other Western Australian Government agencies, and oversight bodies or regulators where authorised or required by law
- with organisations engaged to deliver programs or services on our behalf
- to other organisations, where permitted by law, or where you have given us your consent.

How do you access and correct your personal information?

We are required by law to retain adoption records permanently as State archives. Records of court proceedings are preserved indefinitely under the *Adoptions Act 1994* and are retained as State archives under the *State Records Act 2000*. All other records concerning adoption services must be kept for at least 100 years.

To access records for an **adoption you are a party to**, you must complete an application form under the [Adoption Act 1994](#). Access may be subject to conditions, for example:

- If a Contact Veto has been placed against you (that is a party to the adoption registered an objection to being contacted by you), then you must sign an agreement not to contact that person before identifying information can be provided.
- If an Information Veto was established to prevent the release of identifying information to another party to the same adoption, whilst no longer remaining in effect (these ceased Jan 2005), you are required to meet with a member of Adoption Services, before the identifying information can be provided.

A copy of the application form and details on how to complete and submit the application can be found on our [post-adoption services application form page](#).

To access information related to **post-adoption services**, you can apply under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA). Details on how to submit a request can be found on our [Freedom of Information](#) page.

Where can you find further information?

For further information about how we manage personal information, please refer to the Communities [Privacy Policy](#) or contact our Privacy Officer at privacy@communities.wa.gov.au.