



are you a

former ward

of NSW?

You can read your
Ward file and find
out about your
personal history



Are you a *former ward* of NSW?

How do I know if I was a State Ward?

If you grew up in a State run or church institution or were in foster care, you may have been a State Ward.

To find out for sure you can go to your nearest DoCS Community Services Centre (CSC). To find out which is your local centre look in the White Pages under 'Community Services, Department of'.

What is a Ward file?

When children grow up in State care as a Ward, written records are kept about them. These records are called Ward files.

Why would I want to read my file?

If there was a Ward file made about you, it can help you understand why you were unable to remain with your family. Your file might give you a clearer understanding of your personal history and contain information about events whilst you were a Ward.



Were you a State Ward in NSW?

Would you like to see records held about you from that time?

Then this brochure is designed to help you with your search. So read on.

Will my file contain information about members of my family?

Your Ward file may include identifying information about members of your family and clues as to where they were living at the time you were a Ward.



Will I be able to read everything on my file?

You will be able to read everything that relates to you and does not infringe on the right to privacy of others.

How do I apply to read my file, if I live in NSW?

Go to the DoCS Community Services Centre that is closest to where you are living NOW and ask to read your Ward file.

What information do I need to tell the CSC staff so I can see my file?

You will need to supply your full name (as well as any other names you have

been known by) and your date of birth. The name of your mother and/or father will also be relevant. In order to access your file you will need to provide proof of your identity, like a drivers' licence, birth certificate, pension or health care card.

After I have asked for my file what is the next step?

Your file will be ordered in and you can arrange to read it at a time that is suitable to both you and the worker who will be assisting you.



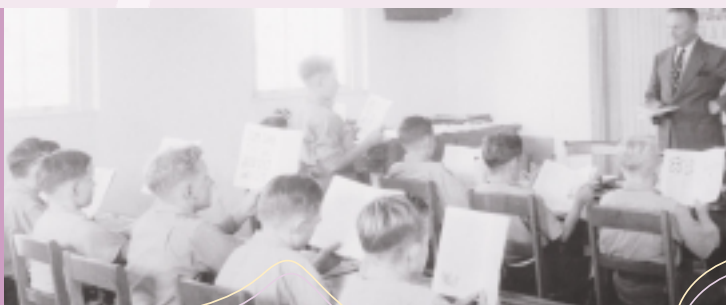
Will I need help in understanding my file?

Sometimes, the information contained in a file needs to be explained or maybe is confusing or upsetting. DoCS will arrange for a Caseworker to be with you while you read your file to help you with any questions you might have. You may also wish to have a support person (like a partner or a friend) with you.

You do not have to read your file in one visit, if you prefer, arrangements can be made for you to read the file over a number of visits.

How long will it be before I can see my file?

It could take time, possibly several weeks for the CSC to find out if you have a file, to order your file in from archives and to prepare your file for you to read.



Can I take my file with me?

Your original file must stay with DoCS, but you can take the original of your birth certificate, school reports and personal photos if they are on your file. You can get photocopies of any other documents which relate to you, after you have read your file.

How do I apply to read my file if I live outside of NSW?

You will need to contact the DoCS Information Exchange Unit. Photocopies of information relating to you on your Ward file will normally be posted to you.

If I live outside NSW can I get help with understanding my file?

Yes. If you would like someone to be with you when you look at your file, please ask the

Information Exchange Unit to make arrangements for a suitable person to assist you to view the file.

Can I ask for specific information from my file?

Yes. If you only want specific information from your file such as medical information, or information that will help you to find your family, make sure you ask us – as this can help to speed up your request.

I was fostered through a church/ non government foster care agency. Can I still see my file?

Some former Wards were placed in foster care with a non government foster care agency like Anglicare (Careforce), Barnardos, Burnside, Centacare (Catholic Church) or Wesley Dalmar. These agencies also hold records that may be of interest to you.



To find out how to access your records contact the agency you were placed with. Their contact details are available in the Sydney White Pages™.

Contacts

NSW Department of Community Services

Your nearest DoCS Community Services Centre address and telephone number can be found in the White Pages under 'Community Services, Department of'.

Information Exchange Unit

| Postal address | Street address |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Locked Bag 28 Ashfield NSW 1800 | 164-174 Liverpool Rd Ashfield NSW 2131 |
| Phone | 9716 2222, or |
| Freecall | 1800 000 164 |

Connecting Kin – Guide to Records

Connecting Kin – Guide to Records is a helpful book designed to help people separated from their families search for their records.

You can get the Guide from your local library, buy it from the Government Information Bookshop (for \$25) or access it on the DoCS website.

Support services

Care Leavers of Australia Network (CLAN)

(A support group for people over 25 who were in orphanages, children's homes or foster care)

Phone 9920 5296 or
9724 1826

Email: careleavers@hotmail.com

Family Tracing Service (Salvation Army)

Phone 9211 0277

The After Care Helpline

(For people who suffered abuse as a child in care)

Phone 9890 3899
Freecall™ 1800 65 68 84

Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC)

Phone 9365 3444
Freecall™ 1800 024 256

Link Up Aboriginal Corporation NSW

Phone 4759 1911
Freecall™ 1800 624 332

www.community.nsw.gov.au

