



# CARE LEAVER APPLICATION TO ACCESS RECORDS HELD BY COMMUNITY SERVICES

## 1 HOW CAN WE CONTACT YOU?

Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other): \_\_\_\_\_

Given name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number (1): \_\_\_\_\_ (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

It will help us to find records about your time in out-of-home care if you can provide as much information about yourself as possible. Don't worry if you can't remember the exact dates – just put an estimate.

**BIRTH DATE:**

**ARE YOU OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT?** Yes  No

**NAME/S YOU WERE KNOWN BY WHEN YOU WERE IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE:**

**FOSTER PARENTS YOU LIVED WITH (if applicable):**

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

**CHILDREN'S HOMES OR INSTITUTIONS YOU LIVED IN (if applicable):**

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

Name  Town/suburb  Year/s

### 3 INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

It might help us to find records about you if we have information about your parents, brothers or sisters. Don't worry if you can't remember exact dates – just put an estimate. If you require extra space for your response please attach a page to this form.

<b>MOTHER'S NAME:</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Birth date:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>FATHER'S NAME:</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Birth date:</b>	<input type="text"/>

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#### BROTHERS/SISTERS:

1 Name	<input type="text"/>	Birth date	<input type="text"/>
	<i>Foster parents/homes where they lived</i> <input type="text"/>		
2 Name	<input type="text"/>	Birth date	<input type="text"/>
	<i>Foster parents/homes where they lived</i> <input type="text"/>		
3 Name	<input type="text"/>	Birth date	<input type="text"/>
	<i>Foster parents/homes where they lived</i> <input type="text"/>		
4 Name	<input type="text"/>	Birth date	<input type="text"/>
	<i>Foster parents/homes where they lived</i> <input type="text"/>		

### 4 PROOF OF YOUR IDENTITY

Before we can begin a search for records we need to have proof of your identity.

A. Please provide a photocopy of one of the following documents as proof of your identity:

- Birth certificate
- Driver's licence
- Health care card
- Passport

B. The name used in the records will be the name/s you had when you were in out-of-home care. If your name has changed, we will need to have proof that you are this person. Please provide a photocopy of one of the following documents (or any other appropriate document showing evidence of your name change):

- Change of Name Certificate
- Marriage Certificate

## 5 PRIORITY ACCESS TO RECORDS

If you have special circumstances that mean you need to access records urgently, you can apply for Priority Access.

Applications granted Priority Access are dealt with before other applications we have received.

To be eligible for Priority Access you must provide evidence of how you meet one of the four Priority Categories (see the attached Fact Sheet for more information).

## 6 LODGING THIS APPLICATION

There is no charge to see records about your time in out-of-home care.

If you live **in NSW** you can either:

- Lodge this form and your proof of identity at your local Community Services Centre OR
- Post them to the address listed below.

If you live **outside NSW** you should post this form and your proof of identity to:

Care Leaver Records Access Unit  
Community Services  
Department of Family and Community Services  
Locked Bag 4028  
ASHFIELD NSW 2131

## 7 CONSENT

If you would like another person or organisation to act on your behalf please complete the details below.

- A. I give the following person or organisation permission to act on my behalf to access records about my time in out-of-home care:

Yes  Not applicable

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- B. I give permission for the records held by Community Services about my time in out-of-home care to be sent to the following person or organisation:

Yes  Not applicable

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8 ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about your application please contact the Care Leaver Records Access Unit on (02) 9716 2500 or 1300 137 160.

## 9 PRIVACY NOTICE

The personal information you voluntarily provide in this form will be used to search for records held by Community Services about you as a child or young person so that the Care Leaver Records Access Unit can respond to your application to access these records. The information you provide will be held by the Care Leaver Records Access Unit. Community Services will not disclose your personal information without your consent unless authorised by law. You have the right to access and correct information held about you if you think it is incorrect.

## 10 CHECK LIST AND YOUR SIGNATURE

Please tick the following boxes *only if they apply to your application* and you have attached these documents.

### A. Proof of Identity

- In my current name
- Linking my childhood name to my current name (if your name has changed)

### B. Priority Access to Records

I am eligible for Priority Access and have attached evidence to show how I meet the following Category:

- Medical
- Compassionate
- Service Provision
- Legal

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### OFFICE USE ONLY

CSC where application lodged: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**CARE LEAVERS ACCESSING RECORDS ABOUT THEIR TIME IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE****WHAT INFORMATION CAN I ACCESS?**

Care leavers can access personal information about themselves from Community Services records about their time in out-of-home care.

In NSW, the privacy law requires Community Services to protect the personal information of other people unless they have given their consent to release the information. As well, the child protection law prevents the release of information that could lead to the identification of a person who reported that a child was at risk of harm.

There is also a general rule of law that any communication between a lawyer and their client is confidential (that is, 'privileged') if that communication was created for the main purpose of providing legal advice or assistance, or preparing for Court proceedings. The reason for this is that the Courts have decided that confidentiality is important because it allows lawyers to speak openly with their clients without the fear that this may be used against their client at some point in the future. The material remains privileged because there is the possibility that at some point in the future, legal proceedings may be commenced.

If our records about you contain this type of information it will be removed from the records before they are released to you.

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE MY APPLICATION?**

We aim to complete each application within eight weeks. However, it may take several months to process your application if we have received a large number of applications or have found a lot of records for applications which are ahead of your application.

**I HAVE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND NEED THE INFORMATION URGENTLY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

We recognise that there are circumstances when a delay in accessing records could disadvantage an applicant. You can apply for Priority Access to records if you have circumstances which fulfill one of the following Priority Categories:

**A. Medical**

- Serious or terminal illness e.g. if you have cancer,
- Serious illness requiring medical history of care leaver or family medical history,
- Genetic condition,
- Transmissible health condition,
- Pregnancy,
- Serious psychological/psychiatric illness requiring history of care leaver to develop an urgent therapeutic response.

## **B. Compassionate**

- Care leaver is 65 years or older.

## **C. Service Provision**

- Birth certificate or other document is required to enable applicant to access services e.g. to apply for a passport or to gain citizenship in another country

## **D. Legal**

- Claim for victim's compensation (where there is a time limit on lodging an application) requiring information contained in records about care leaver,
- Court matter where records will be provided as evidence,
- Management of an estate where records may:
  - assist in determining how assets will be distributed, or
  - enable an applicant to make a claim on an estate or trust.

To apply for Priority Access tick the box next to the Category you are eligible for on the Application Form and attach documents that support your request. For example, please provide a medical certificate if you have a serious illness. Please note that for all categories *except* Compassionate and Service Provision, you will need to attach supporting documentation to be considered for Priority Access.

Each new request for Priority Access is assessed for eligibility and if it is approved it is then ranked against the other applications that have been granted Priority Access. Applications are completed according to the highest urgency. We aim to complete applications granted Priority Access within a month.

## **WHAT RECORDS DOES COMMUNITY SERVICES SEARCH FOR?**

We search for records in your name held by Community Services.

Records are not found for all care leavers. Community Services, following record-keeping practices of the time, destroyed records throughout most of the twentieth century. Sometimes only a ten percent sample of files was retained. Unfortunately, in the past the significance of these records to the people they were about was not recognised.

When we are unable to locate records in your name, a search is conducted for records held in the names of your family members. This occurs because records in the name of one person sometimes contain personal information about other people in their family. If personal information about you appears in these records, it will be copied for you.

## **I WAS IN A HOME THAT WAS NOT RUN BY THE GOVERNMENT. HOW DO I ACCESS RECORDS FROM THIS HOME?**

Some care leavers lived in children's homes that were not operated by the government. Community Services does not hold records from non-government homes. If you mention a non-government home in your application, and we are aware of how to access records from this home, we will provide you with this information when we complete your application.

You can also go to the national Find and Connect web resource for Forgotten Australians to find out where records are held and how to access them: [www.findandconnect.gov.au](http://www.findandconnect.gov.au).

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED WORKING ON MY APPLICATION?**

If you live in NSW and lodged your application at a Community Services Centre, the Community Services Centre will contact you when your application has been completed. If records have been located, the Community Services Centre will make an appointment for you to view the information about your time in out-of-home care. You will be provided with a copy of the records by the Community Services Centre.

If you live in NSW and sent your application directly to the Care Leaver Records Access Unit, staff from the unit will contact you to ask which Community Services Centre you would like to attend to receive the records. The Community Services Centre will contact you when your application has been completed. If records have been located, the Community Services Centre will make an appointment for you to view the information about your time in out-of-home care. You will be provided with a copy of the records by the Community Services Centre.

If you live in NSW but have special circumstances that prevent you from going through a Community Services Centre or you live outside NSW or have authorised a support service to obtain records on your behalf, the Care Leaver Records Access Unit will contact you or the support service when your application has been completed.

## **WHAT SHOULD I BE AWARE OF BEFORE I READ THE DOCUMENTS?**

The language used in past Community Services records reflects the attitudes of Australian society at the time the records were made. Today, we consider some of this language to be inappropriate. Its use in our past records is not intended to cause offence or distress.

## **WHAT SUPPORT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR CARE LEAVERS?**

We recommend that care leavers have a person to support them while they search for records about their time in out-of-home care.

For care leavers who live in NSW, an experienced caseworker or manager casework will be available to answer questions and provide support when you read the records at a Community Services Centre.

For care leavers who live outside NSW, staff at the Care Leaver Records Access Unit are available to answer questions about your application. The unit can be contacted on 1300 137 160 or (02) 9716 2500.

Additionally, the following organisations receive funding from the NSW Government and provide a range of support services for care leavers:

### **Wattle Place - NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians**

Wattle Place – the NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians, is operated by Relationships Australia. Centrally located at Harris Park in western Sydney, close to rail and bus transport links, Wattle Place provides counselling and a range of other support for people who are over the age of 25 and were in out-of-home care in NSW between the 1920s and 1990s, regardless of where they now live. Wattle Place can provide you with advice and support on accessing records about your time in out-of-home care.

Wattle Place can be contacted on 1800 663 844 (freecall) or 02 9633 5395.

### **Aftercare Resource Centre (The ARC)**

This service is operated by Relationships Australia. The ARC is a service for young people aged between 15 and 25 years who have been in out-of-home care in NSW.

The ARC can be contacted on 1800 656 884.

### **Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN)**

CLAN is a national, not-for-profit advocacy organization for mature-aged care leavers based in Bankstown, NSW. Support services provided by CLAN to its members and other mature aged care leavers who have experienced institutional care include the provision of information, advocacy, telephone support, referrals and assistance with file reading. Other services provided by CLAN include a bi-monthly newsletter, library, museum and a website.

CLAN can be contacted on 1800 008 774 (freecall) or 02 9709 4520 or 0425 204 747, or at [support@clan.org.au](mailto:support@clan.org.au). The website is [www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au).

### **International Support Services (ISS) – NSW**

International Support Services (ISS) Australia is a national charity that provides social work services to families and children separated by international borders, in cases such as parental abduction, adoption, migration, asylum seeking, and family separation.

International Support Services NSW office can be contacted on (02) 9267 0300.

### **Link-Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation**

Link-Up NSW works with Aboriginal people who were separated from their families when they were children. Services provided by Link-Up NSW include reunification and counselling.

Link-Up NSW can be contacted on (02) 4759 1911, 1800 624 332 or [linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au](mailto:linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au). The website is [www.linkupnsw.org.au](http://www.linkupnsw.org.au).

### **Special Search Service**

The Special Search Service is run by The Salvation Army. This service is for people who are over the age of 18 years and were separated from their child or family by actions of the NSW Government.

The Special Search Service can be contacted on (02) 9211 6491 or 1300 667 366, or [specialsearchserviceNSW@ae.salvationarmy.org](mailto:specialsearchserviceNSW@ae.salvationarmy.org).

## **HOW DO I FIND OUT ABOUT OTHER RESOURCES FOR CARE LEAVERS?**

The national Find and Connect web resource has been established by the Commonwealth Government to provide information for people who were placed in out-of-home care in Australia and their families. The web resource contains historical information about past and present providers of out-of-home care, details of where records are held and how to access them, and links to resources for care leavers.

The Find and Connect web address is [www.findandconnect.gov.au](http://www.findandconnect.gov.au).