

Fact Sheet

WHO CAN INQUIRE - WHERE THE ADOPTED PERSON IS UNDER 18?

An adopted person, adoptive parent and birth parent

- Please see information below
- There is an Initial Inquiry Form on pages 4-6

Inter-country Adoption Program

The Adoption Information Unit (AIU) offers services to adopted people and adoptive and birth families where Community Services was involved in arranging the adoption of a child through the Intercountry Adoption Program.

1. Services provided by the Adoption Information Unit

- Provision of information from Adoption Files

Including copies of the documentation received from the adopted person's country of origin at the time of placement

- Passing on letters, photos, small gifts and cards between adoptive, birth or foster families

Where an agreement has been made with the country of origin

- Contacting the country of origin on behalf of adoptive families - where a number of years have elapsed - to request any current information and if possible, contact with birth families.

Most countries do not provide information until the adopted person is over the age of 18

- Supporting families who are planning a meeting with a birth or foster family in the country of origin
- Support and guidance about any aspect of adoption including telling their child about their adoption, including conveying new or different information provided by the Agency or birth family.
- Referrals where appropriate to other support services.

2. Services provided by Country of Origin

Due to limited resources it is not unreasonable to expect a long waiting time for a response from the country of origin to any requests to their service.

All countries of origin have informed the NSW Central Authority that they prefer all enquiries about post adoption services to be directed to them through the Adoption Information Unit.

Most countries of origin require the adopted person to be 18 years or older before they will assist with requests to locate birth parents or members of the birth family.

* **KOREA** - adopted people must be 13 or older before Easter Social Welfare Services (ESWS) will accept a request from an adoptive family to make an approach to the birth family.

- When adopted people under 18 visit ESWS requesting birth family contact or to research their birth background, they must first obtain a permission letter from the adoptive parents or AIU if they are not accompanied by their parents.

As most birth family members do not read or speak English, [correspondence needs to be translated into the language of the country of origin](#) at the expense of the adoptive parents or adopted person, prior to sending it.

Families requesting contact with a birth family must be committed to possible ongoing contact. From previous experience we have found the birth families are anxious to hear from the adoptive families regularly.

Adoptive families need to consider cultural differences, sensitivities and challenges affecting the circumstances of the birth family which might make contact difficult. Post adoption services may not be available in these cases.

It may not be possible to make any contact in some particular circumstances.

Some examples where contact may not be possible

- *Where mothers were young single girls who kept their pregnancies secret from their families. In most cases they have probably married and not told their husband about their past. If the secret is revealed, it could cause serious problems for the mother.*
- *If the parents stated "No Contact" at the time of the adoption.*
- *Where there is insufficient background information to locate family members (e.g. child was abandoned at an orphanage).*
- *Where there is false information recorded from the parent, in order to conceal their identity.*

3. Fees

The country of origin may charge a fee for post adoption services.

4. Travelling to the adopted person's country of origin

Many families visit an adopted person's country of origin in the hope of having contact with birth family members, the Agency that arranged the Adoption, Orphanage and/or foster carer.

As you can appreciate, a large number of people request assistance from AIU and the country of origin, so [there may be a waiting time of several months for this service](#).

For this reason [it is important to contact AIU](#) with your request as early as possible - [at least six months prior to your intention to travel](#).

In most cases this will allow time for us to contact the overseas country and allow them time to make whatever arrangements or searches they may need depending on what you have requested.

Unforeseen circumstances may delay the finalisation of the arrangements.

5. Travelling where the adopted person is under 18 years of age

Adoptive parents should complete the Initial Inquiry Form on pages 4-6 and advise the intended dates of travel and what they would like to achieve when they are there.

6. Travelling where the adopted person is over 18 years of age

The adopted person should apply for a **Supply Authority** from the Adoption Information Unit by completing a [Supply Authority Application Form](#), advise their intended dates of travel and what they would like to achieve when they are there.

Once AIU has received the request we will contact you to discuss it in further detail.

AIU will also contact the Central Authority in your country of origin informing them of your travel plans and any specific requests, and await their reply.

You are strongly cautioned to not confirm any travel plans
- including booking and paying for flights and accommodation -
until arrangements with the country you are visiting have been confirmed in writing.

If you would like to speak with a Caseworker at the initial stages of your plans to travel please contact AIU and ask to speak with the Duty Caseworker.

Please note

Applications cannot be accepted by email or other electronic means.

For further information

**Adoption Information Unit
Community Services Division
NSW Department of Family and Community Services**

office hours Monday-Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm

telephone **1300 799 023** cost of local call within NSW & ACT
02 9716 3005 from other states
+61 2 9716 3005 from overseas

email adoption.information@facs.nsw.gov.au

website www.community.nsw.gov.au/adoption

postal address
Adoption Information Unit
Locked Bag 4028
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
AUSTRALIA

street address
Adoption Information Unit
4-6 Cavill Ave
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
AUSTRALIA

CHECKLIST BEFORE POSTING YOUR APPLICATION

Please tick to show **ALL** documents below are **CERTIFIED** and attached to your Application

The Certifier must note on the copied Document: *"the document is a true copy of the original Document"*
Examples of Certifiers are Justice of the Peace, Police Officer, Solicitor, Clerk of the Court, Chemist

- Completed and signed Application Form** filled in with as many details as you can provide
- Birth Certificate**
- Any 2** of the following **certified identification** documents **at least one of which must contain your current signature**:
 - Passport
 - Current photo Driver Licence
 - Medicare Card
 - Photo Card (Proof of Age)
 - Health Care Card
 - Pension Card
 - Veterans' Affairs Card
 - Order of Adoption
- If you have changed your name have you included all the certified documentation showing how you have come to use your current name**
 - Marriage Certificate
 - Change of Name or Deed Poll Certificate
 - Statutory Declaration showing your change of name/s

POST YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION TO

**Adoption Information Unit
Locked Bag 4028
ASHFIELD NSW 2131
AUSTRALIA**

Have a question?
Contact the Adoption Information Unit
Telephone 1300 799 023 or 02 9716 3005

Please note

As you will appreciate, we are unable to process your Application until ALL required certified documentation detailed above is received.

Applications cannot be accepted by email or other electronic means.

We thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Initial Inquiry Form

where the adopted person is under 18

PLEASE PRINT AND COMPLETE INQUIRY FORM ON PAGES 4-6
POST TO THE ADOPTION INFORMATION UNIT
Applications cannot be accepted by email or other electronic means.

SECTION 1 – Information about you

Surname (current)	Title (Mr Mrs Ms)		
First name			
Middle name			
Date of birth	/	/	
Home address	Postcode		
Postal address	Postcode		
E-mail address			
Phone numbers	Home:	Work:	Mobile:
Are you	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted person	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted person	<input type="checkbox"/> Birth parent
Are you	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Indigenous
	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

SECTION 2 – Information about the adoption *Please just provide whatever information you know or remember*

Date of Birth of the adopted person	/	/
Place of Birth (hospital)		
Country of birth		
Birth mother's name	Surname:	
	First & middle names:	
Other names used by the birth mother		
Birth father's name	Surname(s):	
	First & middle names:	
Adopted person's name <u>before</u> adoption		
Adopted person's name <u>after</u> adoption		
Adoptive parents' names	Surname(s):	
	First names:	
Adoptive parents' address when the Adoption Order was made		

SECTION 3 – Details of my inquiry / travel plans

Inquiry

Proposed Travel Plans

(including proposed dates of travel)

SECTION 4 - Declaration

Please tick the relevant boxes

- I, the person named in Section 1, declare that to the best of my knowledge the particulars shown above are true and correct.
- I acknowledge that it is an offence (under the Adoption Act 2000) punishable by 25 penalty units or twelve months imprisonment or both, to knowingly make any false statement in connection with this Inquiry.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to keep the Adoption Information Unit (AIU) informed in writing of any changes to my contact details and that if I notify AIU of any changes I must also provide certified copies of proof of identity documents. This is to ensure that AIU can contact me should the need arise.

Signed _____

Date / /