

The Heritage Service



The Uniting Heritage Service and you.

We manage and release the historic records created by the Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting agencies who ran foster care and institutional care as well as adoption services.

Some people have spent time as children in institutional homes from babies through to teenagers, some have lived in foster care or permanent care, others in residential care, while others have been placed into adoptive families.

These situations have a long-lasting effect as people deal with memories, emotions, and maybe a sense of displacement.

If this is you or someone you know, then you have come to the right place.

The Uniting Heritage Service is a free service which exists to support people and their families.

We curate archived records, photographs, and historical material since 1881 to help you piece together memories and better understand the past.

Why would I contact the Heritage Service?

If you or someone you know spent time in institutional homes as babies, children or teenagers, in foster or residential care, or were affected by adoption, we are here to help.

Perhaps you are curious to discover more of what really happened, confirm some memories, or find some answers about the past.

You may wish to attend reunions with others who share your experiences.

Perhaps you wish to locate family or significant people from your past.

We will welcome you and treat you with respect, regardless of your age, ethnicity, faith, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. We will be respectful and sensitive to your needs and wishes, and recognise that requesting information can be hard.

Uniting

How do we begin?

The first step is to discuss your unique situation and your request for information.

If your request is about an adoption, we will explain the process and the specific requirements in relation to adoption information. We collect contact details along with a copy of identifying documentation that might be required in our search for your information.

Curating your request

Next, our trained staff do their best to search for and locate information and records about you or your family member.

This can take some time as records are housed in different agencies and locations. Our approach is to leave no stone unturned until we are satisfied that we can dig no further.

As we carry out your search, there may be actions that require your further consent to continue. We will keep records of all the times we contact you, including:

- Notes of what you requested
- Notes of the work done on your behalf
- Copies of records given to you.

Giving you the information

Once the search is complete, we arrange a meeting, preferably in person, at a time and place that suits you. You will receive a copy of all the information and records collected.

We spend time going through the found information and explaining the records so you can digest the details within context. You may like to bring a friend or support person/s with you when you receive your records.

After the meeting we offer a follow-up for you to talk about any issues, agreed tasks or questions that may come up. We will also connect you to any additional support services that may be helpful.

Your privacy

The personal information that you share with Uniting Heritage Service employees will only be

recorded if it explains the actions we undertake on your behalf. When you provide us with this information you are agreeing for us to look for the records and information you have requested.

All the information that you share is kept private and confidential and we only record details with your consent. You can stop at any point in the process and come back to it in the future.



About Uniting

Uniting has stood with local communities in Victoria and Tasmania for more than 100 years, delivering services to people of all ages.

We work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Get in touch

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Hours

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Learn more

unitingvictas.org.au