



Searching for birth family in intercountry adoption

Information Sheet 1

Post Adoption Support Service (PASS) offers practical support with searching as well as counseling and mediation when required. There is no charge for this service.

The actual process of searching overseas varies from country to country, and PASS has specific information sheets relating to the individual countries.

However, some of the issues such as the uncertainty and emotional nature of searching, as well as the Australian contacts available to support you, are generic to persons adopted from any country.

Some countries have a post adoption service, others have no services. Some countries have records which will assist in your search, whereas others kept few records or records may have been incorrect. With some countries you will need to undertake the search process yourself, (PASS will support you as you search), whilst with others the adoption agency in that country will undertake the search.

In some cases, overseas agencies will not deal directly with individuals; they prefer to go through an organization or department. In South Australia PASS and AFIS (Adoption and Family Information Services) are the agencies.

PASS can advise you on what the appropriate method of searching is for the country you were born in and provide you with details of who you can contact for further information. We can also commence the searching process on your behalf when you are ready.

Regardless of what country you were born in, there are no guarantees on how long it will take for birth family to be located, or in fact if they can be found. There is also the possibility that birth family, if found, may decline contact. The searching process can be exciting as well as challenging and sometimes a bit of an emotional roller coaster. It is a good idea to enlist the support of family and / or friends as you embark on this journey

The steps we suggest you take are:

- Adoption and Family Information Services (AFIS). This is advised if you are not sure if you have all of your adoption information. There is generally a fee for this, although it may be waived in certain situations. See their contact details at the end of this information sheet.
- Ring or email PASS to make an appointment with Sandi or Nikki to discuss your desire to search. We will explain exactly what needs to happen and why, and how to go about with the searching process.

If PASS is not required, or is unable to initiate the search process for you, we will provide you with as many resources and contacts as we are able. Please remember that where there is no official support service in the overseas country and searching is done through individuals or internet support PASS is not able to verify or vouch for these services. We advise that you proceed with caution and talk with other persons in South Australia who have searched before and used the services which you are considering.

PASS run regular support groups for people who have been adopted, as well as various other seminars and workshops. For further information on these and any other enquiries about our services, please contact Nikki Hartmann or Sandi Petersen on (08) 8245 8100, or email us at passinfo@rasa.org.au

PASS is a program area of Relationships Australia (SA) and is located at:
49a Orsmond St, Hindmarsh 5007

Relationships Australia (SA) has a library and bookshop which has a wide variety of adoption related books and resources, as well as other many other topics. The library and bookshop can be contacted on PH: (08) 8245 8100

Other useful contacts

Adoption and Family Information Services (AFIS)
Level 1, 45 Wakefield St
Adelaide 5000
PH: (08) 8207 0060
adoptions@dfc.sa.gov.au Web: <http://www.adoptions.sa.gov.au/>

Inter-Country Adoptee Support Network (ICASN).
Email contact icasn@bigpond.net.au web: www.icasn.org/