



Outreach process for local adoption

After searching is complete (see searching guide) and we have some contact details for a possible family member we can proceed to send out an outreach letter to the person/s. We may be sending only one letter or we can be sending a number of letters, this will depend the outcome of the letters sent

Before we send any letter/s we will conduct a pre outreach interview with you where we will:

- Talk through what might happen as a result of sending the letter for eg. No response or Immediate response; acceptance or refusal of contact;
- Discuss what your hopes and expectations are around having contact,
- Talk through the possible responses from the person we are contacting
- Gather information that you are comfortable for us to share with a family member if they make Contact for eg. interests, family, where you live, work etc.
- Discuss how we can help with the contact process for eg. Mailbox system, reunion support.

At times the search process may result in finding a number of people with the same name, which means we may be sending out up to 10 or more letters, particularly when people have a more common first and surname. We send a standard letter addressed to the person/s we have found which says this:

Dear _____,

I am writing to you in the hope that you will be able to contact me to assist with a search I am currently doing for a client of this service. I am trying to locate a person by the name of XXXXXXXXXXXX regarding a personal family matter.

I realise that you may not be the only person with this name and therefore may not be the person I am seeking.

Could you please contact me on (08) 8245 8100 to confirm whether or not you are the person I am trying to locate. Knowing if you are not the right person is still very helpful in our continued searching. I can be reached Thursdays and Fridays, by phoning the above number, or email m.noyce@rasa.org.au

I understand that receiving a letter such as this does not give you much information; however we do need to confirm if you are the XXXXXXXX we are searching for prior to disclosing further details. Please be assured that any response will be treated with confidentiality and respect, and any information given by you will not be given to another party without your consent.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours sincerely

Case Manager Community Services

We do not make any mention of adoption in the letter due a range of privacy issues. For example the person we are writing to may not be the person we are looking for or the person may be elderly and have another relative opening mail who is not aware than the adoption took place. Also, in outreaching to an adopted person, we don't know if they know they are adopted, therefore this is something we prefer to discuss with them. The intention of the outreach letter is primarily to get the recipient to ring in so we can establish they are the right person and to gain an understanding of their situation and how they may wish to proceed.

Sometimes when we send an outreach letter the recipient will not respond straight away. We usually wait one month and then send the same letter again, just with an updated date. We do this just in case the letter was lost in the mail or did not reach the intended recipient. We can choose to send this letter by registered mail so that we can see that the letter was signed for at the address.

When we receive a response to the letter we check the identity of the person responding to us to ensure we have the person we are looking for. We may do this by verifying their birth date or checking some other facts. We do not pass on any information about you until we are sure we have the right person.

Sometimes the person responding to our letter is not the person we are looking for and so we can rule them out of the search. If they are a positively identified family member we talk with them about why we are contacting and explain what you are hoping for in relation to the contact and give them the information about you that you have consented to us sharing. At this stage the family member may or may not accept contact, they may need time ask for time to consider , they may provide us with personal information about their past or current circumstances but not give permission for us to pass that on to you. At times a family member may send us a letter but not give permission for us to pass this on to you. Our letter to your possible family member offers them confidentiality and a respectful approach. It is important that we do this as often contact from us is the first time that the found person has had to talk about their own experience. Personal issues and circumstances may come to the surface and we will then take on a support role for the person we are talking with. We also offer our services to a found family member should they want to access further counselling in relation to their own adoption experience.

We cannot pass on any information from your found family member to you unless they have given us permission to do so, in the same way that we do not pass information about you to them unless you have given us permission to do so. There can be occasions where a family member is not able to accept contact at the time we contact them but does agree that we can contact them again at a future date to discuss again.

If the contact is accepted, we will discuss with them the possible ways to be in contact. As we are contacting them because of a search you have initiated we would let them know you will write them a letter initially. This letter can be sent by email or post. We recommend that initial contact comes via our office to the other party and that you only enter into direct communication when you and the other party feel comfortable to do this. We operate a mailbox system where we transfer communication from one person to another for as long as is required.

We can also arrange and provide support for a first meeting of family members. This can take place at our office or if it is not possible to meet at our office we can arrange a first meeting in another agreed location. Some people would like for us to be involved in the first meeting, however others chose to meet without any other people present. This is entirely up to you and the person you are meeting, to decide what will work best for you both.

We can provide support and or counselling throughout this process and ongoing, whether you have been able to connect with your family member or not.

Post Adoption Support Services



Forced Adoption
Support Services

Relationships Australia
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Forced Adoption Support Services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services
Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS) provide specialist services and support for you and your family.
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