



Undertaking a search for your birth mother if you were born and adopted in South Australia

Post Adoption Support Service (PASS) provides assistance and support to persons born and adopted in South Australia who are considering searching for birth family relatives.

Searching can be quite an emotional journey, and you may want to enlist the support of family or friends. There are no guarantees on how long it will take for birth family to be located, and it is possible that the search results may be inconclusive or not give you the information or result you are seeking.

PASS can support you through any stage of the searching process, and can act as mediators if and when you are ready to make contact with your birth family. Before making contact with birth family, we suggest you make an appointment to see someone at PASS, so you can be guided and supported through this next stage.

Once you are ready to begin the search process, here is a list of steps to follow which will help to guide you through this journey:

1. Make contact with Adoption and Family Information Services (AFIS), to get your adoption information¹ (see contact details in 'other useful contacts' section). Provided there is no veto in place, your information will include an authority for you to get your pre adoption birth certificate. (You will need this to access further information).
2. Go to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BD&M) (see contact details in 'other useful contacts' section) to apply for your pre-adoption birth certificate. You can also get a copy of your birth mothers birth certificate, if she was born in SA, which will have her date of birth, and the names of her parents. This information may be useful for searching.
3. You can also do a 'marriage search' through BD&M, which will let you know if your birth mother married and/or changed her name in SA. This will ensure that you have her current name, which is what you will need to search for her.
4. You can also have BD& M do a 'death search', which will let you know if the person you are seeking information about has died.
5. Once you have this information, you can begin your search. Some of the ways you can search are as follows:
 - Electoral rolls (new and old)
 - New and old telephone books
 - Sands and McDougall books in the State Library
 - Baptismal and marriage registers at various churches.

¹ If you apply for adoption information and a veto has been placed, AFIS can only release non-identifying information.

These are the main ways of searching, and if these turn up nothing, PASS can support you with information on where to go for further searching.

Once you have found an address for the person you are looking for, you may then be thinking more about making contact with them. It is important to be aware that the personal circumstances of the 'found' person may make it difficult for them to engage in communication with you, so we advise that you consider how best to make an approach. For further information about this, please see the information sheet 'Making Contact'.

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 Post Adoption Support Services on PH: (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.

Other useful contacts:

Adoption and Family Information
Services (AFIS)
Level 7, 108 North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000
PH: (08) 8207 0060

Births Deaths and Marriages
Level 2, Chesser House
91-97 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000
PH: (08) 8204 9599

SA Link Up Services for Aboriginal people
Nunkuwarrin Yunti
182 Wakefield St Adelaide 5000
PH: (08) 8223 5217

NB: Some of the information in this leaflet has been reprinted with permission from 'Adoptions, Search and Contact', Adoptions and Family Information Service