

State Wards

If you, or your family member, was a [ward of the state](#), it is likely that there are some government records about their time in 'care'. For detailed information about accessing ward records, see [Searching in Your State](#) which explains the system in each jurisdiction.

Wardship records were created and kept as administrative records, and generally relate to matters such as court appearances, police records, admissions and discharges from institutions or foster care placements and maintenance payments by parents. During most of the twentieth century, wardship records were very bureaucratic. People accessing their records can be shocked and disappointed to see how little information there is about the child and their family situation.

For state wards that spent time in charitable or religious homes, records about that time may be on the ward records held by the state government.

In each state or territory, there is a government department whose job it is to respond to requests for access to the records of state wards. To apply for access to ward files, contact these government departments:

Australian Capital Territory

For records relating to state wards from the ACT, contact [Community Services](#) in NSW – before 1989, children from the ACT were sometimes placed in institutional and foster care in NSW.

New South Wales

Contact the [Care Leavers Records Access Unit](#) in the Department of Communities and Justice for access to ward records.

Northern Territory

For access to files relating to children under the care of the NT government, contact the [Department for Children and Families](#). The majority of these records have been extensively indexed.

Queensland

For access to government records in Queensland, contact the Right to Information Unit in the [Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women](#).

South Australia

To apply for access to records about state wards in South Australia, contact [Department for Child Protection SA](#).

Tasmania

The [After Care Support Program](#), run by Children Youth and Families, provides assistance in accessing records of people who were in State care in Tasmania.

Victoria

In Victoria, contact the [FOI Unit](#) in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Western Australia

Contact [Department of Communities, Freedom of Information Unit](#) to access information about former state wards in WA.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/child-welfare-records/state-wards/>