

# Adoption in South Australia

1925 –

## Details

---

Adoption is the legal transfer of guardianship of a child, relinquished by its natural parent(s), to another person. The first official adoption legislation in South Australia was the *Adoption of Children Act 1925*. However, informal adoptions occurred before that date. Adoption in SA is covered under the *Adoption Act 1988*.

When the South Australian State Children's Council was established in 1885, it was given the power to license children for adoption by boarding them out to foster carers without paying a subsidy.

Until 1937 people involved in adoption were free to share information about each other. From 1937 the identity of children was kept secret from relinquishing parents. In 1945 adoptive parents were no longer allowed to know the identity of natural parents. In 1966 total secrecy became possible but not mandatory and this secrecy could be retrospectively implemented.

Pre 1926 records related to adoption can be found among records of children boarded out and records related to the care of wards of the state. This may include foster care, court and maintenance records and printed material such as Police Gazettes. Information may also be available from non-government organisations which are or have been involved in child welfare and adoption.

Access to adoption information in South Australia is governed by the *Adoption Act 1988*. In 2017, the adoption laws changed in South Australia. Among other things, the *Adoption (Review) Amendment Act 2016* removed the provisions allowing for vetoes, which prevented the release of identifying information about one party to the other parties to an adoption.

## More info

---

### Related Entries

#### Related Events

- [Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices, Commonwealth of Australia \(2011 - 2012\)](#)

#### Related Glossary Terms

- [Forced Adoption \(c. 1940 - c. 1970\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Adoption of Children Act 1925, South Australia \(1925 - 1967\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Act 1966-1967, South Australia \(1967 - 1989\)](#)
- [Adoption Act 1988, South Australia \(1989 - current\)](#)

#### Related Archival Series

- [Adoption files, Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department and successor agencies \(1915 - 2004\)](#)

## Resources

- [\*The History of Adoption Project website\*](#), 2010
- [\*Recent changes to the Adoption Act\*](#), Department for Child Protection, 2017

---

You can view this page online by visiting <https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/adoption-in-south-australia/>