Department of Native Welfare [and predecessors], Client Files

1921 – 1969

To access these records:	Please contact Aboriginal History Research Services, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries: Postal Address: PO Box 8349, Perth Business Centre WA 6849 Phone: 1800 161 301 Email: ahrs@dlgsc.wa.gov.au Website :https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/aboriginal-history/aboriginal-history-research-services
Records Location	These records are held by Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, State Government of Western Australia (1 July 2017 - current)

Details

The Department of Native Welfare (and predecessors) Client Files comprise 'case records' about children and families who had come into contact with the Department between 1921 and 1969, when it was responsible for the 'care and protection' of indigenous children. The records include information about births and deaths, as well as about marriages, which had to be approved by the Protector. As a permit was required for employing an Aboriginal person, records were kept on employment and finances. The Department sometimes paid the medical expenses of Aboriginal people when treated by a doctor. Police inspected the communities regularly and a census of those present was taken. Information differs from person to person, as with most records from the past. But the fact that Aboriginal Western Australian's lives were so controlled by government does mean that quite a lot of information has been kept.

Access Conditions

Personal and family history applicants apply for their own records or those of their direct ancestors through the Aboriginal History Research Unit. Applicants can apply for any records relating to them held by the Department, or those relating to a specific purpose such as evidence of genealogy, dates and place of birth or a specific ancestor. Any relevant family history material uncovered during the research process is sent to applicants. For privacy reasons, applicants cannot receive records about living family members. If the applicants ancestors are still alive they will be required to submit a consent form. If the consent of a family member is required it should be signed by the relevant individual(s) with a copy of their photo identification along with the application. The relevant forms are available on the Aboriginal History Research Unit website.

Records

In 1972, the 'care and protection' of Indigenous children in Western Australia passed from the Department of Native Welfare to the new Department for Community Welfare, which had previously been the Child Welfare

Department. These records were transferred to the Department for Community Welfare and in 2013, these records are held by the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

Earlier files are held at the State Records Office (Perth), listed under Aboriginal Affairs Department. Some Native Welfare files were converted to Community Welfare files and will be included in the general case files of what is now Child Protection and Family Support.

The 2016/17 Department of Aboriginal Affairs Annual Report discusses the transfer of these records from the Department of Child Protection and Family Services to the Aboriginal History Research Unit.

More info

Organisations in these records

Related Organisations
- Department of the North West, State of Western Australia (1 January 1920 - 1 January 1926)
- Aborigines Department, State of Western Australia (1926 - 1936)
- Department of Native Affairs, State of Western Australia (1936 - 1954)
- Department of Native Welfare, State of Western Australia (1955 - 1972)

Resources

- *Aboriginal History*, State Records Office of Western Australia website, 2012
- *Aboriginal History Research Services*, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, 30 April 2018

Records

Related Contact Details

- Aboriginal History Research Services - Contact Details

You can view this page online by visiting https://findconnect.efront.digital/entity/department-of-native-welfare-and-predecessors-client-files/