

4 How do I access records held by a non-government organisation?

Non-government organisations, like religious and community organisations, may keep records you need to claim compensation. This fact sheet provides information about requesting records and how **TasVOCAL** can help.

Why do I need records?

This information could be important to for many reasons including:

- making a complaint about what happened to you as a child
- applying for compensation.

Information might be about:

- the time you spent in out-of-home care, like at an orphanage or home
- the role an institution had in your care arrangements as a child
- a complaint you made to an organisation.

The government might also hold records about your childhood. These include ward files, court records, school records and police reports. If you need to access these, read **TasVOCAL**'s fact sheet '*How do I access records held by a government organisation?*'.

TasVOCAL can advise you about accessing your records.

What are my rights?

You might have a legal right to access your information from non-government organisations.

If an organisation refuses your request, please contact **TasVOCAL** for advice.

Who should I make a request to?

Your first step is to find out who ran the non-government organisation e.g. a church, community group or charity.

For more information you can search the '**Find & Connect**' website.

Using 'Find & Connect'

Find & Connect (www.findandconnect.gov.au; 1800 16 11 09) is a free historical information service about institutional care in Australia.

You can search *Find & Connect* by the institution's name, location or date. Once you find the institution, look for the button 'Records'.

If you don't know an organisation's name

If you're having trouble finding an organisation's name, please contact **TasVOCAL** for help.

If you were a ward of the state, or if the state was involved in your care arrangements, you could also consider accessing your government records (see **TasVOCAL**'s factsheet '*How do I access records held by a government organisation?*'). These may tell you which organisations you were in.

How do I request my records?

When you make your request, make sure you clearly describe what records you would like. Make sure you include the name you were known by as a child.

You might need to include a copy of some photo identification so that the organisation knows that they are giving the records to the right person.

What to expect

The older the information you request the less likely it is to be found. Some records may not exist or may have been destroyed. Even if you do find records, they may contain minimal or inaccurate information and may not answer all of your questions.

There may be privacy issues that mean that the organisation may black-out portions of the document to protect another person's right to privacy.

Trauma and emotion

Accessing information about your childhood can have a significant emotional impact. The information may bring up traumatic memories or uncomfortable feelings.

It is a good idea to view your information with someone you trust, like a friend or support person.

Information about support services can be found on **TasVOCAL**'s website below.

TasVOCAL can provide you with a referral to a Redress Support Service (RSS) or other therapeutic supports.

How to contact **TasVOCAL**

- Visit: www.legalaid.tas.gov.au
- Free call: **1300 366 611** ask for **TasVOCAL**
- Email: TasVOCAL@legalaid.tas.gov.au

Disclaimer

This fact sheet should not be used as substitute for legal advice. No responsibility is accepted for any loss, damage or injury, financial or otherwise, suffered by any person acting or relying on the information contained within this fact sheet, or omitted from it. You should seek legal advice about your own particular circumstances.

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Need legal help?

Freecall, chat online or visit us
Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm



1300 366 611 Ask for **TasVOCAL**



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