

Find and Connect Service Scoping Study

Bulletin No 1
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TO: Find and Connect stakeholders, including care leavers and care leaver organisations, state and territory child welfare agencies, organisations providing tracing and support services and past care providers

FROM: Anne Elliott, Project Manager, Encompass Family and Community

Find and Connect Service Scoping Study gets underway

We are very pleased to be issuing this initial bulletin to provide information on the scoping study for the new Find and Connect Service announced in the 2010-11 federal Budget (see attached media release).

If you have received the bulletin directly, your contact details have been provided to us by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) or by the child welfare agency in your state or territory. FaHCSIA and the states and territories are jointly funding this scoping study.

The proposed Find and Connect service will, of course, be informed by work that many organisations have been doing for years in supporting Forgotten Australians and former child

migrants, and by care leavers who have been trying to trace their personal history information.

We will be listening to what you have to say about an effective model for the service. In particular, we are aware that it is important that Find and Connect adds value to existing efforts, rather than duplicating them. The intention is that a national access point will streamline access.

We have already started gathering information in advance of meeting and talking with stakeholders – this process is about moving from an understanding of needs, issues and barriers to actively considering how best to deliver a nationally coordinated access service.

A number of strategies will be used to consult as widely as possible within the short time-frame for the study, which is due for completion by the end of August. These include targeted face to face or telephone interviews, focus groups and/or surveys during July and early August.

ABOUT US

Anne Elliott, Chris-Maree Sultmann and Tracey Smith work with Encompass Family and Community, a consulting company based in Brisbane and specialising in child and family welfare. Our professional backgrounds and expertise in working with government and NGO's – including in foster care, adoption and information systems – stand us in good stead to manage the scoping for Find and Connect. More information about us is available on our website (www.efac.com.au) if you are interested.

What will the study include?

Our job is to consider what Find and Connect may look like and how it may operate. Some of the tasks involved are:

- map existing record sources, identify commonality and gaps in service provision and the potential to access these record keeping sources as part of the new Find and Connect service
- identify State and Territory legislative and provider barriers that restrict access to records within and across state and territory boundaries
- clarify minimum proof of identify requirements, barriers to access, the costs associated with retrieving records and the essential access needed to meet international requirements to verify identify
- clarify existing costs for member of the public in searching and being provided with copies of records
- identify what case management and counselling support care leavers require to assist with recovery of their records
- to propose a model that offers a truly national coordinated access point and support services to help Forgotten Australians and former child migrants trace their personal and family histories and reunite with family members where possible.

How to contact us: We will be making a time to consult with many of you; however we welcome your input at any stage of the study. Contact us through:
email: enquiries@efac.com.au fax: 07 33986102
post: Encompass Family and Community, 11 Brown Street, Camp Hill Q 4152.

