

Fee waived birth certificates for people facing disadvantage

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Background

There are several ways people can access free birth certificates:

- Legal Aid NSW has a Memorandum of Understanding ('MOU') with the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages providing an allocation of free birth certificates for eligible people. More information [here](#).
- Corrective Services NSW has a program providing free birth certificates.
- The Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages in most jurisdictions have a fee-waiver policy.

Contents of factsheet

This factsheet has information about the Corrective Services program and the fee waiver policies of:

- [New South Wales](#);
- [Australian Capital Territory \(ACT\)](#);
- [Queensland](#).
- [South Australia](#).
- [Victoria](#).
- [Tasmania](#).
- [Western Australia](#); and
- [Northern Territory](#).

It also includes a [template support letter](#) for NSW applications.

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New South Wales

[The NSW Fee Waiver Policy](#) states that fee waivers may be available for:

- new birth certificates;
- previously issued birth, death, marriage, change of name and recognised details certificates;
- integrated birth certificates;
- change of name registration and certificates, and
- change of sex registration and certificates.

Eligibility

Category A: orders from legal proceedings

Fees will be waived for any Registry service required under an order, direction, warrant or finding of an Australian court or tribunal, as part of statutory oversight or investigative process.

Category B: people who have recently been incarcerated

Adults released from NSW correctional facilities within the past three (3) months and children currently in a NSW Youth Justice centre or released within the past three (3) months.

Category C: people impacted by former government policies

Members of the Stolen Generations and people impacted by forced adoption policies in an Australian jurisdiction.

Category D: people recently impacted by a declared natural disaster, war or terrorism

- People who have been impacted by a declared natural disaster or terrorism event in Australia within six (6) months of the event.
- People who were born in NSW and have been impacted by a declared natural disaster, terrorism event, or war in another Australian or international jurisdiction, within six (6) months of the event.

Category E: people experiencing financial hardship and other forms of hardship

Fees may be waived for applicants who are experiencing financial hardship **and** who have recently been impacted by one or more of the following events:

- domestic violence and other forms of violent crime;
- homelessness or housing instability;
- serious injury, acute medical condition or chronic long-term illness;
- personal disaster resulting in significant property loss (eg. house fire/burglary); or
- identity related crime.

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Supporting Evidence

See section 4 of the [Fee Waiver Policy](#) for a complete list of the supporting evidence that must accompany fee waiver applications under each category.

Applications under categories C, D and E may need a recent letter of support from an Australian based government agency or reputable community organisation recognised for helping people access government services. See section 6 of the policy about what to include in the support letter and the fee waiver support letter template.

How to apply

Applications can be submitted by the person seeking the fee waiver or another person helping them.

You must include:

- The completed application form for each service that you are applying for (eg. birth certificate, death certificate, change of name registration and certificate, change of sex registration and certificate, marriage certificate)
- The completed fee-waiver form, which can be found in section 2 of the [Fee Waiver Policy](#).
- The required supporting evidence for your applications and the fee waiver request.

In-person

- At your nearest Service NSW Service Centre.

By post

- Post the form, any supporting evidence and clear photocopies of the applicant's ID to:

NSW Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages
GPO Box 30
Sydney NSW 2001

What ID to include

Applicants should provide at least **two (2)** forms of current ID. The best forms of ID are:

- driver licence;
- photo ID or proof of age card;
- Medicare card, Centrelink card or statement. Centrelink and Medicare will sometimes print statements for people noting their identity if they are receiving support, but don't currently have a card;
- bank card,* tertiary or school ID card;
- Health Care Card;
- recent utility bill with current address; and
- an applicant who has recently left prison can use their MIN card/number and release papers as ID.

*You **must** cover or redact the account number and expiry date when recording bank cards.

If an applicant has limited ID, include as much of the following information as possible in the support letter:

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- the names and birthdays of all their siblings;
- what hospital the applicant was born at;
- where their parents were born;
- if their parents were married, the year they married and where they lived when they were married;
- where their parents were living when the applicant was born; and/or
- if their mother and father were working when they were born, the jobs that they were doing.

Corrective Services NSW

People in prison in NSW are eligible to apply for a free birth certificate if they:

- are exiting Corrective Services NSW custody within six (6) weeks to six (6) months; and
- were born in NSW; and
- meet the criteria of a 'vulnerable person'.

To be considered a 'vulnerable person', an inmate must:

- be in financial hardship (less than \$500 in their inmate account); and
- satisfy one or more of the following factors:
 - be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
 - be at risk of homelessness on release from prison;
 - have a confirmed disability or be a NDIS customer;
 - have low literacy skills or are unable to read; or
 - be under 25 years of age; or over 65 years of age.

Inmates can identify themselves as eligible. They will need a printout of their individual trust account to verify financial hardship. Secondly, an inmate may be identified via the eligible candidates list. Offender Services and Programs generate an automated weekly report, listing inmates who are considered vulnerable and eligible for free ID under the program. This is used to identify and/or confirm inmate eligibility for the program. The eligibility list includes current trust account balances used to verify financial hardship for all inmates.

Once established, an eligible inmate is provided with a Form 38 - Application for Birth Certificate - Vulnerable Inmate - and a Services and Programs Officer (SAPO) can assist in completing this.

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Australian Capital Territory

The ACT [fee waiver policy](#) states that applicants can request a fee waiver if they are experiencing financial hardship and need a birth certificate to receive immediate services.

Examples of circumstances for requesting a financial hardship fee-waiver include:

- A person cannot afford the certificate fee and needs a birth certificate urgently to apply for income support payments, housing or employment.
- For safety reasons when seeking refuge from a volatile domestic or family setting, where ID is needed to urgently access financial services such as bank accounts.

How to apply

- Complete the [fee waiver application](#) form which includes the application for a certificate.
- Attach evidence of the applicant's circumstances (the application form includes examples of evidence required).
- Send your application to bdm@act.gov.au or submit in person at an Access Canberra Service Centre.

Where to send the application

Hard copy applications can be sent to the following address:

Access Canberra
Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra ACT 2601

Cultural support to get a birth certificate

An approved community representative can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants who:

- do not have the proof of identity documents you need to apply, or
- need a birth certificate for a child in their care.

To get help to support your application, you can contact one of the approved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives (see [here](#) for the list) or email bdm@act.gov.au

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Queensland

The [QLD Registry's fee waiver policy](#) says: *if you are suffering financial hardship and have an immediate need for a certificate, you may be able to have your application fee waived.* It includes examples like a child, whose parents are in financial hardship, needing a birth certificate to enrol in school or someone in financial hardship needing to prove their identity who is a victim of family or domestic violence. Needing a certificate to obtain housing, Centrelink, access income or employment could also qualify.

How to apply

- Information about how to apply is [here](#). The application process can be done online or offline.
- Offline option: print and complete the [form](#).
- Whether the application is done online or offline, the applicant needs:
 - [Evidence of financial hardship](#).
 - [Evidence of immediate need](#).
 - [Proof of ID](#)

Where to send the application

Hard copy applications can be sent to the following address:

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 15188,
CITY EAST QLD 4002

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South Australia

[Births, Deaths and Marriages in South Australia](#) assesses applications for a fee waiver on a case-by-case basis, there is no separate form.

How to apply

- Print and complete the [application form](#) or apply [directly online](#), but leave the payment section blank.
- Include a brief cover letter explaining why the applicant should be considered for a fee waiver (i.e they are reliant on Centrelink or have no income, they are experiencing homelessness, they are experiencing family or domestic violence, they are reliant upon your service for accommodation, they are engaged with your service for x,y.z services).
- Include some evidence of financial hardship like a copy of their Centrelink card or general information about their circumstances.

Where to send the application

Births, Deaths and Marriages
Consumer and Business Services
GPO Box 1351
Adelaide SA 5001

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Victoria

Victorian BDM has a [fee waiver policy](#) and [factsheets](#) for organisations supporting people facing disadvantage and for specialist homelessness services. There is also a dedicated email address for help with fee waiver applications: bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au. In the subject line, mention 'assisting a client who is experiencing disadvantage.'

How to apply

Online

This is the **fastest way to apply** for a certificate.

- Follow the instructions under the heading *Apply online* on [this webpage](#).
- Clients need to pay up-front then request the fee-waiver.

Offline

- Follow the instructions under the heading *Apply offline* on [this webpage](#).
- Post the documents to the address below or submit them at a Justice Service Centre.

Where to send offline applications

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria
GPO Box 4332
Melbourne VIC 3001

Cultural support to get a birth certificate

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not need to prove financial hardship. Paper fee-waiver applications (scanned) can be emailed directly to bdm.koori@justice.vic.gov.au

Victorian-born Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on remand or in prison can also access their certificates for free. BDM works with prisons to complete this.

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Tasmania

[Tasmanian BDM](#) has an application form that eligible people can use to apply to have the fee waived for a certificate and/or registration application.

People are eligible if they are:

- Experiencing serious financial hardship
- A survivor of family violence
- A refugee
- Experiencing financial loss from a natural disaster

A support letter on the official letterhead of a relevant government agency, charitable organisation, community organisation, doctor or other relevant service must be supplied in addition to the form.

How to apply

- Print and complete the form [Application Form Birth Certificate](#) leaving the payment section blank
- Obtain clear photocopies of 3 forms of ID following the Identification Requirements in section 4 on page 2 of the birth certificate application form.
- Print and complete the form [Application Form Fee Waiver](#) under the heading *Other Forms*.
- Obtain supporting letter(s) from relevant organisation(s) to accompany the application for a fee waiver form

Where to send the application

Post the completed birth certificate application form, copies of ID, the fee waiver application form and supporting letter(s) to:

Births, Deaths and Marriages
30 Gordons Hill Road
ROSNY PARK TAS 7018

You can also apply in person at any Service Tasmania location.

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Western Australia

The West Australian Registry will only consider waiving the fee for a birth certificate or providing a concessional fee in exceptional circumstances for people experiencing significant financial hardship.

How to apply

- Print and complete the form [Birth Certificate Application Form](#) leaving the payment section blank
- Obtain clear photocopies of 3 forms of ID following the Identification Requirements listed on page 3 of the birth certificate application form.
- Provide evidence of significant financial hardship
- Include a cover letter that explains why a birth certificate is needed
- Include any other documents that explain your circumstances

Where to send the application

The birth certificate application form, copies of identification documents, cover letter, evidence of significant financial hardship and any other supporting documents should be posted to:

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 7720
Cloisters Square
Perth WA 6850

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Northern Territory

[The Northern Territory Registry](#) does not have a policy for waiving fees. The Registry will only waive a fee when someone has experienced a natural disaster. Requests must be made in writing and addressed to the Register General.

Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Attorney General's Department, NT Government
Ground Floor, Zone B, Nichols Place, Cnr Cavenagh & Bennett Streets
GPO Box 3021
Darwin, NT 0801

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Annexure 1 - NSW template support letter

[On your community service's letter head]

[Name, role, organisation and contact details]

NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages
GPO Box 30
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Births Deaths & Marriages,

Application for [insert relevant certificate] with fee waiver

Full name: *[insert]*

DOB: *[insert]*

Address: *[insert]*

We are assisting *[NAME]* who was born in *[LOCATION]*. We assist people who *[insert service description]*

We enclose:

1. Application form for *[insert relevant registration or certificate]*
2. Fee Waiver Application signed by *[NAME]*,
3. *[list supporting evidence]*, and
4. Copies of identification *[2 types – give reasons if 2 types not available]*

Application for fee waiver

We refer to the Fee Waiver Policy published by Births Deaths & Marriages on 15 April 2026. Our client is eligible for a fee waiver under category *[insert category]*

Insert detailed description of client circumstances:

- *Describe how their circumstances correspond to the relevant category of eligibility.*
- *If they are eligible under category E, describe how they are in financial hardship.*

We therefore request a fee waiver because *[NAME]*:

- Is eligible under category E because they are experiencing financial and *[note other forms of hardship]*; OR
- is eligible under *[category A, B, C or D]*

Please contact us on *[PHONE]* or *[EMAIL]* if there are any issues.

Yours sincerely,
[NAME]