

# Media Release

**Gabrielle Williams MP**

Minister for Government Services

Minister for Consumer Affairs

Minister for Public and Active Transport



Thursday, 5 October 2023

## LISTENING LEADS TO FAIRER BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR ADOPTEES

The Allan Labor Government has delivered on its commitment to provide adoptees with a legal birth certificate that recognises their full family history.

Victorians who have been adopted deserve the choice in how their birth history is recorded and recognised.

Minister for Government Services Gabrielle Williams today announced that adopted people aged 18 years or older can now access an integrated birth certificate – showing their name at birth and after adoption and listing both their birth and adoptive parents.

Previously, the only legal birth certificate available to them was in their adopted name and listed their adoptive parents only.

For many Victorians subject to historical forced adoption practices, the integrated birth certificate will be an important step toward addressing some of the wrongs they experienced.

The reform delivers a key recommendation of the 2021 *Parliamentary Inquiry into responses to historical forced adoption in Victoria*. Adopted Victorians can now choose a certificate that tells their whole story, with the same legal weight as a standard birth certificate.

Birth certificates are crucial documents, helping Victorians to prove their identity, enrol in education and access essential services.

In 2012, the Victorian Parliament apologised for past adoption practices and over the past year the Labor Government has put in place reforms to adoption services, to ensure children's interests remain central to any decision making.

The Government thanks all Victorians who came forward to tell their story as part of the Inquiry and subsequent work to introduce integrated birth certificates.

Victorians affected by past and forced adoption can contact VANISH (Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help) for free and confidential support. More information is available at [vanish.org.au](http://vanish.org.au).

For more information on how to obtain an integrated birth certificate, visit [bdm.vic.gov.au](http://bdm.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Government Services Gabrielle Williams

*“Apologising for past forced-adoption practices isn’t enough – we’re acting to make Victoria a fairer place for adopted people.”*

*“Providing Victorians who are adopted with legal recognition of their natural parents and heritage is the right thing to do and we’re proud to have made it a reality.”*

**Media contact:** Silvia Ferretti 0408 363 545 | [silvia.ferretti@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:silvia.ferretti@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

## **Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes**

*“We know the immense grief and trauma caused by historical forced adoptions continues to be felt by many people, and we want to help to ease this pain.”*

*“An integrated birth certificate is more than just a piece of paper – it provides a full recognition of a person’s story.”*