



(<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au>)

Getting started on your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history

A step-by-step guide to tracing your family history

1. Use a family tree chart to organise the search

The best way to keep track of family history is to create and maintain a family tree. Templates to record your family tree information can be downloaded free from the web at a number of places such as the [Ancestors site](http://www.byubroadcasting.org/ancestors/charts) (<http://www.byubroadcasting.org/ancestors/charts>) or [Cyndi's List](http://www.cyndislist.com/free-stuff/printable-charts-and-forms/) (<http://www.cyndislist.com/free-stuff/printable-charts-and-forms/>).

2. Trace backwards from yourself starting with your full birth certificate

Collect as much information as possible about yourself, your parents, grandparents etc. by searching sources of information such as [birth, death and marriage records](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/births-deaths-marriages) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/births-deaths-marriages>). [Spelling and language of names](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/step/spelling2) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/step/spelling2>) may vary considerably on birth certificates and other records.

Birth certificates will provide you with the following information:

- father's full name, age, place of birth and occupation at the time
- mother's maiden name, age, place of birth and occupation at the time
- parents' marriage details.

3. Find out if your family was affected by the Queensland 'Protection' Acts or other legislation

Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders were subject to the [Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897](http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?dID=67) (<http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?dID=67>) and other [Queensland legislation](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/qld-legislation) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/qld-legislation>). Many personal records were created throughout this period contain valuable information for family history researchers. Due to the personal nature of this information most of these files can only be accessed through [Community and Personal Histories](http://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-history) (<http://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-history>).

It can also be worthwhile to look at other legislation. See a [full list of Acts which affected Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/remove/qld/legislation.html) (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/remove/qld/legislation.html>).

4. What other information may exist about your family?

Many references to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are contained within records created by other Queensland government departments that were not directly responsible for the administration of the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897 and with other non-government agencies. For example, you may locate references to your relatives in:

- [Church and mission records](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions>)
- [Defence force records](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/defence) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/defence>)
- [Police records](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/police) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/police>)
- [Station records](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/station) (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/finding/station>)

- **Tindale Collection** (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/tindale>) of Aboriginal genealogies created in the 1930s
- **Margaret Lawrie Collection** (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi/margaret-lawrie>) of Torres Strait Islander genealogies.

5. Read Indigenous family history guide books

The following books are great "how to" guides for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders starting their family history research.

Note: some of the contact information and resources listed within them may not be up-to-date.

Lookin for your mob : a guide to tracing Aboriginal family

trees ([http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager355100&group=Guest&onCampus=false)

[vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager355100&group=Guest&onCampus=false](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager355100&group=Guest&onCampus=false)) /

Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead. Canberra : Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1990

Telling it like it is : a guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

history ([http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager393539&group=Guest&onCampus=false)

[vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager393539&group=Guest&onCampus=false](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager393539&group=Guest&onCampus=false)) /

Penny Taylor. Canberra : Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1992

Compiling your family history ([http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager451380&group=Guest&onCampus=false)

[vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager451380&group=Guest&onCampus=false](http://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/primo_library/libweb/action/dlSearch.do?vid=SLQ&institution=SQL&search_scope=SLQ&query=any,contains,slq_voyager451380&group=Guest&onCampus=false)) /

Nancy Gray (21st ed) Sydney: ABC Enterprises and the Society of Australian Genealogists, 2002

See also

- Family history **Info Guide: How to trace your family tree** (<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/tree>)

The information provided was produced in consultation with Community and Personal Histories, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Colin Sheehan, formerly of the Department of Environment and Resource Management.