

Guidelines for applying for Confirmation of Aboriginality

South Coast
Medical Service
Aboriginal Corporation



In order for our organisation to process your application, your Aboriginal Heritage will need to be linked to the South Coast of NSW.

If your Indigenous heritage is from a different region of NSW or Australia, we recommend that you apply for confirmation with an organisation in that region.

Why do I need to prove my Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage?

Your Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage is something that is personal to you. You do not need a letter of confirmation to identify as an Indigenous person. However, you may be asked to provide proof or confirmation of your heritage when applying for Indigenous-specific services or programs such as Indigenous health and wellbeing services, employment (Indigenous identified positions), school programs and scholarships for Indigenous students, university courses offering placements to Indigenous students, Centrelink and housing assistance offered to Indigenous people.

These services and programs are intended to help address the inequalities Indigenous people face as a result of past government policies, inadequate health care and lack of educational and employment opportunities. Requiring confirmation of heritage is about honouring this intention and ensuring that Indigenous-specific services and programs are actually benefitting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

How do I confirm my Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage?

The following three 'criteria' are used to confirm Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage:

1. Being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
2. Identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
3. The current Directors of SCMSAC are satisfied that you are a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent

How do I meet these criteria?

Knowing your family history is the key to obtaining Confirmation of your heritage. To establish that you are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, you must provide a Family Lineage Chart (e.g. a family tree) on the approved form. You will need to gather as much information about your family history and heritage as possible to complete the chart. This can sometimes be challenging. We have provided information on the back of the Family Lineage Chart to help guide you through the process.

What if I am under 18 years of age?

If one, or both, of your natural parents have had their Aboriginality confirmed by South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (SCMSAC), you are automatically eligible for confirmation upon supply of your Birth Certificate identifying your parent(s) by name. If you are able to, provide a completed Family Lineage Chart and/or a copy of your parents' Confirmation of Aboriginality, this will help us process your application.

If a Local Indigenous Community Organisation in a different region of NSW or Australia has confirmed your parents' heritage, we recommend that you apply to that organisation for confirmation.

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Who determines my application?

Applications are considered by the SCMSAC Board of Directors at formal Board Meetings.

How long will it take to process my application?

Issuing Confirmations of Aboriginality is not the core business of SCMSAC, therefore there is no set time frame for processing applications. You will be contacted by SCMSAC after your application has been processed, whether it has been approved or declined.

What happens if my application is declined?

Consideration and approval of Confirmations is at the discretion of the SCMSAC Board of Directors, who may decline an application for various reason, including not knowing who the applicant is and/or their Aboriginal Heritage. You may be known to other Aboriginal people in the area, however, this will not in itself ensure you receive Confirmation through SCMSAC. In particular, SCMSAC cannot issue you with a Confirmation if you have not provided sufficient evidence to establish that you meet all the criteria as outlined above. If declined we will provide you with a brief letter stating that the Board has endorsed or declined Confirmation.

Where do I send my application?

All Confirmations for Aboriginality are to be lodged (posted, emailed or hand delivered directly) to:

Jane Ardler Centre
51-53 Berry Street Nowra
NSW 2541

These applications are not accepted at any other location.

What if I have further questions?

For further questions please call: (02) 4448 0200 or free call: 1800 215 099.

Confirmation of Aboriginality Checklist

- My Aboriginal Heritage is linked to the South Coast of NSW.
- I have completed 'Confirmation of Aboriginality' application form.
- I have completed 'My Family Tree' form.





CONFIRMATION OF ABORIGINALITY

i Please read the information in our “Guidelines for Applying for Confirmation of Aboriginality” before completing your application. Send your application c/- Executive Assistant at the address below.

NOTE: All contact information is compulsory, unless stated otherwise.

| Name: _____
| DOB: _____ | Phone: _____
| Address: _____
| Email address: (if applicable) _____

APPLICANTS 18 YEARS AND OVER COMPLETE THIS SECTION

I identify as: Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
I am recognised as such by the _____ Community:
 where I have currently/formerly lived for _____ years
 which is my traditional area, or where my family has lived for _____ years

APPLICANTS UNDER 18 YEARS COMPLETE THIS SECTION

My natural parent(s) named below, have confirmation of Aboriginality from SCMSAC

Parent(s) Current Name: _____
Parent(s) Former Name: _____

ALL APPLICANTS COMPLETE THIS SECTION

I have attached the following documents:

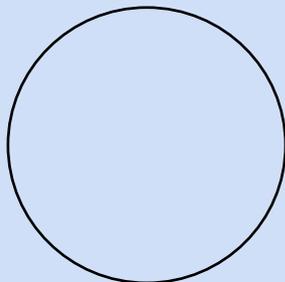
Family Lineage Chart (required) Birth Certificate (is required to link relationships) Other: _____
 I consent to SCMSAC retaining an electronic copy of this application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

It is hereby confirmed that the above-named applicant has provided sufficient evidence to indicate aboriginality.

COMMON SEAL



| Resolution No. _____

| Date: _____

Name/Director Signature Date

Name/Director Signature Date

Tips for completing My Family Tree

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Tracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family histories poses a unique set of challenges. Below are some tips to help you find the information you need to complete your 'My Family Tree'.

- 1. Start with what you already know:** What are your parents' names? When and where were they born? Do they have any brothers or sisters? Who are your grandparents? Write this into your chart.
- 2. Talk to family and community members:** Stories passed down through your family, and interviews with family members, are a key source of information. Since the 1980s, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have recorded the life stories of their family and those of other community members. These are useful when tracing your family history.
- 3. Births, deaths and marriage records:** These records and certificates can help you fill in the blanks in your family tree. Each state/territory has a registry where you can apply for the certificates of your parents', grandparents', great grandparents' and so on.* *If they are alive, you will need their permission.
- 4. Research your family's traditional area:** Contact the local historical society of the town where your family is from. These societies are a great source of local and family history. You can pay a small fee for them to do a search on your behalf, or you can become a member and access their resources and facilities directly. Many societies also have indexes to cemetery records, local newspapers etc.
- 5. Expand your search:** Look for other sources of information. Historically, governments, organisations and individuals created records about Indigenous people. These include welfare and protection boards, adoption agencies, education and health departments, police, churches, missionaries, anthropologists and other academic researchers. Consider different types of records such as photographs, maps, genealogies.

Key points to remember when researching

Name variations: When you look for records, it is important to check all possible spelling and variations of a person's name. Your ancestors may have used, or been known by, many different names during their lifetime, including a traditional name, kinship name, nickname or married name. Employers or missionaries also changed the names of a child when a child moved to a foster home or training institution

Record and use all of the information you find: Remember that brothers and sisters share the same cousins and grandparents. Sometimes it is possible to find out more about a particular ancestor, by looking into family members outside your direct lineage.

Research one family line at a time: It can be confusing to try to research your mother's family and father's family both at the same time.

Be prepared for what you find: Historical records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often reflect the biased and racist views of the white officials, missionaries and station owners who created them, and may contain material, words and ideas that are derogatory and offensive. Records could also contain private and intimate details about you or your family members, or information that conflicts with and challenges, what you know about your family's history.

Other Useful Resource: *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Family History Unit*
freecall: 1800 352 553 | email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au | website: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family>



My Family Tree

MAIN PERSON (YOU)

 Please complete as many boxes as you can. If you are having difficulty tracing your family history, the information on the back of this form may help.

