Statutory Declaration for Informal Relative Carers Victoria
Acknowledgements

Representatives from the following Government Departments were involved in the development of the Statutory Declaration for Informal Relative Carers and the attached information booklet:

Department of Human Services
- Placement and Support Unit, Children Youth and Families Division
- Office of Community Building and Housing
- Rural and Regional Health and Aged Care Services
- Acute Health

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Group Co-ordination Division
- Student Wellbeing and Health Support Division
- Service Development Division
- Legal Services Unit, Executive and Ministerial Services Division

Department of Justice
- Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Victoria Police

Department of Planning and Community Development
- Office of Senior Victorians

Office of the Health Services Commissioner

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For various reasons a growing number of parents are unable or unwilling to raise their children. The responsibility often falls onto grandparents or other relatives to take on the full-time care of the children.

Many relatives undertake this care on an informal basis that does not give them any legal status over the children or formal recognition as a carer.

This care is often taken on with little support and assistance. It is recognised that a major problem facing many relatives who are caring for children in this ‘informal’ way is having their care status recognised and therefore being able to gain access to information and services related to the care of the children.

It is hoped that the Statutory Declaration for Informal Relative Carers will help to have informal carers’ status recognised and improve access to services they require to get on with their important role of nurturing and caring for the children in their care.

Bernie Geary OAM
Child Safety Commissioner
I am very pleased to introduce the **Statutory Declaration for Informal Relative Carers** which has been developed by the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner.

When children and young people are unable to live at home with their parents and are placed with a relative, there are many things that need to be organised.

I am therefore pleased to provide you with a tool that could assist you with enrolling children in kindergartens, school and childcare facilities and other services that you may need to access for the children in your care.

The task that you have taken on is a challenging one and I hope that the introduction of the statutory declaration will make things easier for you and take away some of the complexities in your role as carer.

The Brumby Government is committed to supporting and assisting relative carers in the critical work that they do. We will therefore continue to work with organisations such as the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner to develop additional resources and initiatives that will assist you in this most important role.

Carers should be proud of the commitment they have made and the positive contribution they are making to the lives of the children and young people in their care.

**Hon Lisa Neville MP**  
Minister for Community Services
Introduction

An increasing number of children and young people in Victoria are unable to live at home with their parents and as a result are placed in the care of a relative. Such placements are often made informally by an arrangement between the child’s parent/s and relative carer/s.

When children and young people are placed with relatives in this informal way, there may be difficulties for the carer in accessing a range of government and community services because of a lack of official documentation that shows they are caring for the child/ren.

‘Relative’ carers are sometimes called ‘kinship’ carers in other documents you may read and by other organisations working with families. Kinship care is the care that is provided to a child by a member of their family, other than their parents.

In some situations, children are also placed in the care of a significant friend or a person within the child’s extended social network. Although this statutory declaration is titled for ‘relative carers’, it is acknowledged that this tool may be used by carers who are not relatives. The relationship to the child should however be identified in Section 1 where it asks for the child’s relationship to the carer to be recorded.

This statutory declaration for informal relative carers has been developed to assist carers to gain better access to services for the children in their care.
Statutory Declaration for Informal Relative Carers

When should I use this statutory declaration?

You can use this statutory declaration whenever you need to verify your care of the child/ren and to assist you in gaining access to services or information about the children in your care. This may include:

- Schools
- Kindergartens
- Child care facilities
- Health services
- Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Engaging in recreational services such as the YMCA, sporting clubs or scouts/guides.

Gaining access to information or services with the assistance of the statutory declaration will depend on the legislation or procedures related to the particular service or agency. In some instances, the consent or action of the parent/legal guardian may still be required.

You may find that this statutory declaration will not be sufficient in some situations/cases, and so you may be required to provide additional information or documentation.

Some organisations may require the statutory declaration be signed at the same time the carer is requesting information or access to services.

Before using this statutory declaration, you should check with the particular agency or organisation as to whether this statutory declaration will:

- assist you to obtain the services or information you are seeking
- assists you to provide any consent required by the organisation
be accepted by the Victorian state organisation
be accepted by a federal organisation or an organisation providing services based in another state or territory outside of Victoria.

If the children stop living with you, you can no longer use the statutory declaration.

How can I access this statutory declaration form?

This statutory declaration form is available from government and community agencies including:
- Health Services Commissioner
- Disability Services Commissioner
- Local Government Offices
- Community Health Centres
- Community Legal Centres
- Grandparents Victoria
- Aboriginal Out of Home Care Agencies
- Department of Human Services Regional Offices
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Offices
- The Mirabel Foundation
- Seniors Information Victoria
- Neighbourhood Houses
- The Office of the Child Safety Commissioner
- Child First Agencies
- Out of Home Care Agencies
- Family Support Agencies

The statutory declaration form can also be downloaded from the following websites:
- www.ocsc.vic.gov.au
- www.cotavic.org.au
- www.dhs.vic.gov.au
- www.education.vic.gov.au
- www.seniors.vic.gov.au
Completing this statutory declaration

Each individual informal relative carer should complete a statutory declaration. If you are caring for a child/ren with a partner/spouse and they are going to assist with the provision of care, then they will also need to complete their own statutory declaration.

Where can I get assistance in completing this statutory declaration?

You may be able to receive assistance to complete this declaration from organisations where this form is accessed. Agencies where you would intend to use the Statutory Declaration may also be able to assist you with completing the form. You may want to contact them first to check that this is possible.

Does the statutory declaration give me the legal custody of the child/ren in my care?

This declaration does not give you the right to legal custody of the child/ren in your care. This declaration does not affect the legal custody of the child/ren in any way nor does it affect the legal rights of the child/ren, parents/guardians.

Where possible and appropriate, you may want to inform the legal guardians/parents that this declaration has been completed.

Who can witness the declaration?

Section 107A of the Evidence Act lists who can witness a statutory declaration. This list has been placed closer to the statutory declaration form at the back of this booklet.

It is suggested that you may want to telephone first to arrange a time that best suits you and the other person to ensure availability.

Police officers can witness a statutory declaration. As many police stations are open 24 hours per day, this may be a good option for when you need a statutory declaration witnessed.
A list of Justices of the Peace (JP) in your area is available from your local council. The JP registry also provides a Recorded Information Line for the public who require the services of a JP, in any locality of Victoria.
Telephone: 1300 365 567
Go to the Department of Justice Website: www.justice.vic.gov.au to locate a list of Justices of the Peace
If you need to locate a JP within the Melbourne CBD area ONLY, telephone the Justices of the Peace Registry on (03) 8608 6018.

ASSISTANCE, COMMENTS & FEEDBACK
If you require any support in relation to the use of this statutory declaration or you would like to make any comments about your experiences with using the statutory declaration, you may contact the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner (OCSC) on 8601 5884 or email childsafe@ocsc.vic.gov.au
It is also important that the OCSC is able to review this process in the future to assess its effectiveness and whether we need to change any aspects of it. Receiving comments about the use of the statutory declaration will help the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner to ensure that this document is assisting you in your role as carer.

If you are interested in being contacted in the future to discuss your experiences using the statutory declaration, please contact the OCSC by email on childsafe@ocsc.vic.gov.au or phone 8601 5884.

If you experience difficulties obtaining health services or health information for the child/ren in your care, you can contact the Health Services Commissioner on 8601 5200 or Toll free 1800136 066.

**PENALTIES FOR MAKING A FALSE DECLARATION**

If you make a declaration which you know is false, you will have committed an offence and are liable to face criminal prosecution for perjury.
Other useful contacts

The following organisations may also be able to assist you with information and support about caring for the child/ren in your care:

**Parentline** .................. 13 22 89
**Maternal and Child Health line** .................... 13 22 29
A 24-hour, 7 day a week statewide telephone service available to families with children up to 6 years of age

**Nurse on Call ......1300 606 024**
24 hour health advice and information from a registered nurse

**The Mirabel Foundation**
PO Box 1320, St Kilda South VIC 3182
Tel: 9527 9422
Fax: 9527 9466
Email: mirabel@mirabelfoundation.org.au
Web: www.mirabelfoundation.org.au
Mirabel assists children who have been orphaned or abandoned due to parental illicit drug use and are now in the care of extended family.

**Grandparents Victoria**
14 Youlden St, Kensington VIC 3031
Tel: 9372 2422
Email: director@grandparents.com.au

**Seniors Information Victoria**
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
Telephone: 1300 135 090
Email: www.askcota.org.au

**Aboriginal Organisations**
**Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)**
VACCA represents the interests of the Victorian Aboriginal community in policy, programs and service for the welfare of their children and families.

**Head Office**
139 Nicholson Street, East Brunswick VIC 3057
Tel: 8388 1855
Email: vacca@vacca.org

**Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative**
37-53 Dalmahoy Street, Bairnsdale VIC 3875
Tel: 5152 1922

**Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative**
20 Rumbalara Road, Mooroopna, VIC 3629
Tel: 5825 2333
Lot 5 Drummond Road, Shepparton VIC 3630
FREECALL 1800 637 371

**Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd**
87 Latje Road, Robinvale, VIC 3549
Tel: 5026 3353

**Mildura Aboriginal Corporation**
120 Madden Avenue, Mildura VIC 3500
Tel: 5022 1852
Email: macrecep@hotkey.net.au
Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV)
Level 3, 145 Smith St, Fitzroy, 3065
PO Box 1246 Collingwood VIC 3066
Tel: 9489 3500 or 1300 730 119
KPV provides a wide range of resources for members and non-members. Visit their website on www.kpv.org.au and click on the images to find information about the various resources on offer. Transition to school and Welcome to kindergarten may be particularly helpful.

Department of Human Services
Child Protection Referrals - Regional Offices
Eastern Metro .......... 1300 360 391
Southern Metro ....... 1300 655 795
North/West Metro ..... 1300 664 977
Barwon South West .. 1800 075 599
Gippsland................. 1800 020 202
Grampians............... 1800 000 551
Hume ...................... 1800 650 227
Loddon Mallee.......... 1800 675 598

Child Protection
Child Protection After Hours 13 12 78

Family Relationship
Advice Line ............ 1800 050 321

Child FIRST provides child and family information, referral and support for vulnerable children, to connect these families to services. Generally these families have complex needs that can impact adversely on a child’s development unless a timely intervention occurs. You can contact your Regional DHS Office to locate one of the above services in your area.

To find your local CHILD FIRST agency, look up www.cyf.vic.gov.au and select from “QUICK HELP”.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Head Office............. 1800 809 834

Other government contacts
Office of the Child Safety Commissioner .... Tel: 1300 782 978
The Office of the Child Safety Commissioner can provide useful guides for relative carers on topics such as legal issues, finance and parenting.

Ombudsman Victoria
Regional Callers........ 1800 806 314
City ........ 13 36 77 or 1800 555 677

Financial counselling
Ring either of the following offices for contact details of a financial counselling agency or agencies in your area. All financial agencies funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria provide financial counselling services free of any charges.

Consumer Affairs Victoria
Tel: 1300 55 81 81

Consumer Rights Council
Tel: 9663 2000

Telephone Counselling
Lifeline Melbourne
24 hour telephone counselling, information and referral service
Tel: 13 11 14
**WIRE Women’s Information**
Provides free information, support and referrals to women across Victoria.
**Telephone support:** 1300 134 130
*9am to 5pm Monday to Friday*

**Walk In Centre:**
Ground Floor,
Queen Victoria Women’s Centre,
210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Website: [www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)
WIRE has a comprehensive database to help you find the support you need.

**Emergency Relief**
Several welfare organisations provide emergency relief for people experiencing a severe financial crisis. This may be in the form of food, clothing and household goods such as second-hand furniture and blankets.

The contact points for the larger emergency relief centres in Melbourne are listed below:

**Vic Relief and Foodbank**
Unit 4/2 Somerville Road
Yarraville VIC 3013
Tel: 9362 8300
Provides food and material aid to welfare agencies across Victoria.

**St Vincent de Paul**
43-45 Prospect St, Box Hill VIC 3128
Tel: 1300 305 330
Provides food vouchers, second-hand clothing and furniture. A volunteer from the organisation assesses people in their own homes. There are 76 St Vincent de Paul centres throughout Victoria.

**Salvation Army Crisis Centre**
Tel: 1800 627 727
Crisis intervention, service assisting people with accommodation, material aid and counselling.

**Brotherhood of St Laurence**
67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy VIC 3065
Tel: 9483 1183

**State Schools Relief Committee**
172 Burwood Highway, Burwood VIC
Postal Address
Locked Bag 7000, Burwood VIC 3125
Telephone: 9888 8722
Fax: 9888 8926
Assists with clothing and footwear for children in government schools upon receipt of an application form sent by the Principal of the school the student is attending.

**Wesley Support Service**
(part of Wesley Central Mission)
148 Lonsdale St, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 9662 2355
Offers assistance for people and families in crisis. Material aid is limited to every three months per person. It includes food parcels and food vouchers, Met tickets, phone cards, blankets, pharmacy and travellers’ aid (vouchers).

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For assistance with Emergency Relief in provincial and rural areas please check with your local council or Department of Human Services.
107A of the Evidence Act 1958, people who may witness the signing of a statutory declaration in Victoria are:

(a) a Justice of the Peace (JP) or a bail justice;
(b) a public notary;
(c) an Australian lawyer (within the meaning of the Legal Profession Act 2004);
(d) a clerk to an Australian lawyer;
(e) the prothonotary or a deputy prothonotary of the Supreme Court, the registrar or a deputy registrar of the County Court, the principal registrar of the Magistrates’ Court or a registrar or deputy registrar of the Magistrates Court;
(f) the registrar of probates or an assistant registrar of probates;
(g) the associate to a judge of the Supreme Court or of the County Court;
(h) the associate of an Associate Judge of the Supreme Court or of an associate judge of the County Court;
(i) a person registered as a patent attorney under Chapter 20 of the Patents Act 1990 of the Commonwealth;
(j) a member of the police force;
(k) the sheriff or a deputy sheriff;
(l) a member or former member of either House of the Parliament of Victoria;
(m) a member or former member of either house of the Parliament of the Commonwealth;
(n) a councillor of a municipality;
(o) a senior officer of a Council as defined in the Local Government Act 1989;
(p) a medical practitioner registered under the Health Professions Registration Act 2005;
(q) a dentist registered under the Health Professions Registration Act 2005;
(r) a veterinary practitioner;
(s) a pharmacist;
(t) a principal in the teaching service;
(u) the manager of an authorised deposit-taking institution;
(v) a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia or the Australian Society of Accountants or the National Institute of Accountants;
(w) the secretary of a building society;
(x) a minister of religion authorised to celebrate;
(y) a person employed under Part 3 of the Public Administration Act 2004 with a classification that is prescribed as a classification to which the section applies or who holds office in a statutory authority with such a classification;
(z) a fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (Victoria).