

How to Obtain a Record of Baptism

1. Background and context

A **Baptism Certificate** is provided by the congregation / Minister when a baptism occurs. The congregation keeps records of all baptisms in their Baptismal Registers. If an individual no longer has a copy of their Baptism Certificate, a new Baptism Certificate cannot be issued, however a '**Record of Baptism**' can be provided based on records kept in Baptismal Registers. This is accepted as proof of baptism by the major Christian denominations in Australia.

1.1 Archiving of Baptismal Registers

Once Baptismal Registers are full, congregations are encouraged to arrange for these to be archived. The archiving process varies between states.

- **Tasmania:** congregations send Baptismal Registers to the State Library and Archives of Tasmania who process and catalogue these records. Listing of records held are searchable on their website, though there can be a material delay between records being sent for archiving, and these being processed and listed on the website.
- **Victoria:** congregations send Baptismal Registers to the Synod's Victorian Archive Office and records are processed and archived.

2. How to request a Record of Baptism

The process for getting a Record of Baptism will vary depending on the state and how long ago the baptism took place. Individuals seeking proof of their baptism are encouraged to follow the below steps in order, as applicable.

2.1 Contact the congregation /church directly

Individuals can contact the church where the baptism took place to request a Record of Baptism. Baptismal Registers can take years to fill and are not always archived in a timely manner, so even if your baptism took place many years ago, the Register may still be in use at the church.

If needed, the Synod Archivist can assist in providing up to date contact information for church congregations.

2.2 Contact the Synod Archives Office (Victorian Baptisms only)

Individuals baptised at a Victorian congregation of the Uniting Church should contact the Archives Office with the following information:

- Name of church where the baptism took place
- Name of the individual baptised
- Approximate date of the baptism

Contact details

Thursday and Friday, 9am-4pm

Email: archives@victas.uca.org.au

Telephone: 9964 4080

A search of the registers will be made, and if an entry is found, the Archivist is authorised to issue a Record of Baptism.

Whilst every effort is made to assist applicants, the collection of Baptismal Registers held at the Archives is not complete, and it may not always be possible to locate a Register and issue a 'Record of Baptism'. If the Archives Office does not hold the relevant Baptismal Register, the Archivist will not be able to issue a Record of Baptism but may be able to provide contact details for the relevant congregation.

2.3 Search the State Library and Archives of Tasmania (Tasmanian Baptisms only)

If Baptismal Registers from Tasmanian congregations are no longer held by the local congregation, individuals can search the Tasmanian Archives online to see if a Baptismal Register has been archived and catalogued.

Search Tasmanian Archives: https://libriestas.ent.sirsiidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/tas/

If the Baptismal Register is identified, contact the State Library and Archives of Tasmania for advice on whether the record is classified as 'Open' and able to be viewed, and if so, how to arrange access to the Baptismal Register and get a scan / photograph of the relevant entry as evidence of baptism.

Please note that the State Library and Archives of Tasmania are not authorised to issue a Record of Baptism. If needed, the Synod Archivist can issue a Record of Baptism if you provide copy of relevant scanned Register as evidence.

2.4 Statutory declaration

If you have exhausted every avenue in finding a record of your baptism, the next step is to obtain a statutory declaration from someone who attended the baptism (parent or Godparent), stating that the baptism took place.

This declaration is accepted by most churches as sufficient proof of baptism.