

DESCENDANTS DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q: What is Descendants Day?

A: Fremantle Prison hosts an annual Descendants Day Ceremony to recognise descendants of convicts, enrolled pensioner guards and warders who arrived at the Swan River Colony between 1850 and 1887.

Fremantle Prison hosts the event to recognise the contribution that the system of convict transportation made to the early development of the colony and its rich legacy in Western Australia's cultural and built heritage.

Those who believe they are eligible for a certificate are invited to submit an application. If considered eligible the applicant and one guest will be invited to the ceremony where they will receive a personalised certificate and enjoy morning tea at the Prison.

Q: How do I know if I am eligible?

A: If you are directly descended from a Western Australian convict, enrolled pensioner guard or warder who arrived at the Swan River Colony on board a convict ship then you are eligible to apply.

Q: How do I apply for Descendants Day?

A: If you believe you are eligible for a certificate, please complete the [attached](#) pedigree chart. This is essentially a family tree. If you have your own comprehensive family tree you are welcome to submit this as your application providing it contains all the necessary information.

Please be sure to include all known birth and death dates in the [direct](#) line between yourself and your related convict, pensioner guard or warder. If dates are not known please include as much information as you have on hand.

It would also assist us if you could submit any **copies** you may have of birth, death and marriage certificates to prove this. (Please do not submit original documentation).

If you would like to receive the pedigree chart by post please contact the Functions and Events Coordinator by email: functions@fremantleprison.com.au or telephone: 08 9336 9205 and a pack will be posted out to you.

Q: If I don't have any birth, death and marriage certificates can I still apply?

A: Yes, you can still apply for a certificate without these documents. They are useful for proving your claims but our Genealogist can often verify your claims without them. We do ask you to include as much information about the birth and death dates as possible. If our Genealogist is unsure of anything she will contact you directly.

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Q: How do I submit my application?

A: Please post your completed application to:

Alana Law
Functions and Events Coordinator
Fremantle Prison
1 The Terrace
Fremantle WA 6160

All applications must be submitted by Friday 11 March 2011 as numbers are limited for eligible applicants to attend the award ceremony each year.

Fremantle Prison will send you a letter to confirm receipt of your application. Your application will then be processed by the Genealogist and you will be advised of your eligibility in April 2011.

Please avoid hand delivering applications as the Functions and Events Coordinator is not always available.

Q: Can my mother/father/sister/brother/daughter/son also apply?

A: Due to limited numbers only one applicant per immediate family line will be eligible for a certificate each year.

If you submit an application then no one else on that side of your family can apply for the same convict/pensioner guard/warder within the same year.

Q: I know someone who is descended from the same convict/pensioner guard/warder as me. Can I still apply?

A: As many people do research into their own family history they might meet other descendants along the way. Every year we get people descended from the same person apply and sometimes people don't even realise they have a connection. Providing someone in your immediate family does not also apply your application will still be accepted.

Q: I am descended from a Parkhurst Boy. Can I apply?

A: Unfortunately Parkhurst Boys do not meet the criteria established for Descendants Day.

The penal system in WA and the commencement of the Convict Establishment, now known as Fremantle Prison, did not commence until 1850. Prior to 1850, when Parkhurst Boys arrived, WA was not a penal colony and therefore the "boys" were under a system of master and not part of the convict establishment. Parkhurst boy's records for those sent before WA was a penal colony have been available for research for many years and not considered in the same context as transportees.

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If they re-offended and came under the penal system with an allocated convict number then you will be eligible.

Q: Where can I get more information about the convict I am descended from?

A: Fremantle Prison has an online [Convict Database](#) that contains information on all convicts that arrived in the Swan River Colony. The database features convict names, convict numbers, ship and arrival dates and more.

Q: If I can't attend the Descendants Day ceremony can I still apply?

A: Providing you meet the event criteria you can still submit an application if you are unable to attend the event. If considered eligible your certificate will be posted out to you following the actual event.

Q: Who organises the event?

A: Fremantle Prison organises the Descendants Day ceremony including handling applications, sending invitations and merchandise order forms to guests, designing and printing of the certificates, and all arrangements in relation to the ceremony.

The applications, while compiled by Fremantle Prison, are forwarded to a Genealogist for verification. The Genealogist has been involved with the event since its inception. She verifies all applications in her own time.