

What do you want to share?

www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

Are you wondering about letting others see information about yourself? This document will help you think about the pros and cons. You can decide how much, or how little. It is up to you.

On this website, all details can be seen for people who have died. For living people, their details are kept out-of-sight on the database - only initials can be seen. The public cannot see your details unless you give your consent.

FIRSTLY: Begin by finding what is already there – hidden on the database. There might be some details copied from the BRB or from other sources. It might be just your name and maybe birthdate – or there might be some photos or other information. You can [ask for a print-out](#) by downloading the form using the hyperlink 'My details from the database' which is on the homepage of the website.

SECONDLY: We will send you a copy of what we have and you can decide what you want to be seen – all of it - or just parts. It is recommended that you at least show your full name so that the family tree is more meaningful – rather than a lot of initials.

THIRDLY: We will display whatever you decide. No more changes will be made unless you tell us. You can withdraw your consent.

ADVANTAGES OF SHARING

- Your history: Wouldn't you like to be a real part of recording your own family history?
- Your descendants: What do you want your grandchildren to know about your life?
- Creating the story: You are the best person to tell your story. It would be difficult to add to the family history if the only way of getting more details was from old sources – rather than directly from our relatives, while they are still living, through oral histories etc.
- Family tree: You probably want to know how you are related to key figures in the genealogy - but we cannot place you there unless we know something about you.
- 'New' relatives: If you would like to know about your distant relatives, it is reasonable that you let them know something about yourself. Wouldn't it be great to link up with some of your second cousins? How can they discover that you exist? How could you contact them? We can facilitate this.
- Headsup: We need to know how to contact you if you want to receive news to keep up to date with McLean clan activities, reunions or developments on the website.
- Future: Family history did not stop a century ago. It continues with what people are doing today.
- Who will see it? Most of the information on our website will be of little interest to the general public. Most of the visitors will be your distant relatives. Although it can be seen by the public, in practice, the only people who will be interested in finding it will be your own close relatives.
- A great deal of your personal details are already 'out there'.
 - The original McLean family history was published in 1995. It probably includes some of your 'private' information. The BRB is available in quite a few family history societies.
 - Much is already public knowledge through telephone books, newspaper articles and public notices of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, land transactions and court hearings etc.
 - A surprising amount can be found through Google and social media.
 - Advertising agents can piece together many aspects of your life through loyalty schemes and credit cards.
 - Metadata is a growing fact of life.
 - National Archives and state governments have records of previous contacts with government – births, death and marriages, naturalizations, military service, travel in and out of Australia, pensions, citizenship, patents, electoral rolls etc. Some of this is available after a lapse of years.
 - Government departments have a lot of other current information about you, but of course most of this is not allowed to be made public.

Well, given that a lot of your personal information is already out there, being accessed by strangers, why would you not be happy for your own relatives to be able to see something about you? In fact there are some good reasons for wanting to keep personal information private. Let's look at these.

PROBLEMS OF DISCLOSING

- Choice: Your reasons for wanting your privacy are, well, private. You do not have to explain yourself to anyone about preferring your own privacy. You might feel awkward to unexpectedly come across certain information about your family on the internet, knowing that anyone else can see it too, even if they are not going to use this information 'against' you.
- Types of information: Individuals have their own ideas about how comfortable they are with others knowing some aspects of themselves. Some people may be proud for the world to know about their parentage, racial identity or religious affiliation, whereas you may want to keep this to yourself. Some may feel OK about others knowing their place of employment or the name of their spouse, whereas others may be concerned about this.
- Joining the dots: There is a difference between, on the one hand, information already scattered 'out there' in various public sources, and on the other hand, this same information being collected together in one place.
- Forever: Once something is on the internet, there can be no control over who eventually gets this information and what they do with it. You can withdraw your consent and we can remove certain items from our website - but it might be too late. It might have already been copied and there is no way of getting it back. Of course this is the same as anything in print but the speed and accessibility of the internet makes it a larger issue.
- Shame: What type of information could cause you embarrassment or damage your reputation? Innocent people can be denigrated such as a child born out of wedlock. Or the grandchild of a notorious character might be unfairly 'tarred with the same brush'.
- Harm: What are the risks? What is the worst that could happen? What are you afraid of? Who might want to act against your interests? Sometimes there are concerns about the misuse of information for identity theft, cyber bullying, credit fraud, raiding your bank account, nuisance calls, invading your privacy, direct marketing, unwelcome contact from former partners and debt collectors. But what particular information is useful to criminals or unscrupulous characters?
 - The initials of your first names and your place in the family tree are of no use to others. These minimal details are the only things we publish without your consent, but we will even remove your initials if you are worried about it. A stranger can make nothing of your initials whereas you can easily recognise your close relatives in the family tree because you know the context and can work forwards from the full name of one of your ancestors.
 - Emails or postal addresses enable us to contact you. However these will never be seen by the public nor passed on to third parties. The only exception is that, with your permission, we can facilitate connections between distant relatives.
 - Bank account details are required for internal accounting purposes – at your direct request only.
 - We will never know your passwords, Medicare, driver's licence, Centrelink CRN, taxation ATO or ABN. These have no relevance to family history.
 - Full names, birth dates, birth places, parentage, spouses & children are at the heart of family history. But we are not aware of any instances where published family histories have been raided for identity theft or any other dark purpose.
 - Identity theft: One specific detail, by itself, would be of little use to someone who wants to steal your identity. For example, a name by itself can just be made up, or a birthdate can be any date. However it becomes possible if a stranger is able to link more items, such as name, birthdate, recent photo and address. The risk can be easily over-stated, but if you are concerned about this, you could decide to only show your name but hide your birthdate and all other details.

BALANCE: As with most things in life, there are risks in everything, and all of us are used to finding ways to reduce any risks and weighing these up against the possible benefits. There is a risk in crossing the road. We suggest that any slight danger of family histories being misused is negligible compared to the many benefits of sharing.

LEGALITIES: We exceed the Australian Privacy Principles. Contrary to what some people might think, there are very few restrictions on what can be made public – as long as it is true. But of course we do not want to publish anything which will cause concern.

WHO CAN GIVE CONSENT?: You must be over 18 years old. You cannot give consent on behalf of anyone else.

FIND OUT MORE: You can have a closer look at our full 'Privacy Policy' which is item S30.1 in 'The Small Print' directory on the left of the homepage. Or look at the government's website at www.oaic.gov.au.

..ooOoo..