

YOUR *newsletter*

A space where we keep Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers, family, friends and service providers connected and up to date about any news and the supports available for our community of people affected by out of home care or harmed in other Australian institutions



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Relationships Australia
TASMANIA

Relationships Australia Tasmania acknowledges that we work on Aboriginal land, Lutruwita, the lands of the Palawa and Pakana peoples. We are deeply committed to community action and to community healing. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Always was, Always will be.

Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of YOURnewsletter. With summer upon us it is a great time to stop and bask in the warm sunshine to contemplate all the beauty around us here in lutruwita, Tasmania.

While warming up, it certainly has not been the lazy days of summer here at Relationships Australia for our Adult Specialist Support Services team. The team has been excitedly planning and implementing some wonderful new programs and preparing to mark significant dates in the coming months.

On February 2nd, we launched our inaugural Art Therapy course lead by Angela and Eliza here in the south. The enrollments have exceeded our expectations. We will highlight some of this amazing work in the next newsletter as well as at a public exhibit and online after the completion of the course. The intention of the project is to present, in an artistic, engaging, and insightful way, the

history of Forgotten Australians with a view to raise public awareness of who survivors are and what they experience. We aim to provide 'touchstone points' for survivors and their families to connect with, and recognise, past experiences in an affirmative public setting. This will be a long-term project utilising Art Therapy and electronic medium (online library connected with RA Tas Website) as a point of displaying the art.

On February 23rd we will be launching our "The Voices of Forgotten Australians" videos at the Henry Jones Hotel in the hopes of getting media coverage to share your stories far and wide and bring attention to your lived experience.

With the support of our amazing reference groups, we have also been able look into how we will acknowledge *or not* the many significant dates approaching. A huge thanks to all that contribute and help us to help you in a survivor informed way. We learn so much from each one of you and your individual experiences. With the many significant dates approaching we remind you to be kind to yourselves and seek support when needed.

Please read on to enjoy the many articles, artwork and important information included in this addition. We look forward to your feedback as always and wish you a wonderful REST of summer.



Significant Dates for people that spent time in Australian Institutions for 2023

13th February

National Anniversary to the Apology to the Stolen Generations

21st March

National Anniversary to the Apology for Forced Adoptions

13th May

Apology to Former Ward of the State Abused in Tasmanian State Care

27th May to 3rd June

Reconciliation Week calls for all Australians to commit to reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples, commencing from the 1967 Referendum and High Court Mabo Decision which granted Native Title Legislation

3rd July to 10th July

NAIDOC Week- celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Achievements, history and cultures

August

National Australian Family History Month

4th August

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

13th August

Apology to Tasmania's Stolen Generations by the State Government

18th October

Tasmanian Government Apology to Forced Adoptions

22nd October

National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

16th November

National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants

Forced Adoption Support Groups Meet-up

28th October 2022

Forced Adoption Support Services supports people who have been impacted by forced adoption practices through individual and group work.

On 28th October 2022, the Southern and North-West Forced Adoption Peer Support group members travelled to Campbell Town on a wet and windy day for their first meet-up.

All who attended agreed it was a great success, sharing a lovely lunch at local restaurant Zeps, while getting to know one another.

The participants were a mix of mothers and adopted people, and the conversations flowed freely as some shared bits and pieces of their journey so far and updated the group on news from other states.

All agreed it would be wonderful to plan to do this again in 2023.



Tasmanian Government Apologises

8th November 2022

"We have failed you; we are all accountable, and we are sorry"

On the 8th of November the Tasmanian Government made a formal apology to all victims and survivors of Tasmanian institutional child sexual abuse at the Parliament House.

Tasmanian Premier, Jeremy Rockliff and other political leaders including Opposition Leader Rebecca White and Greens Leader Cassie O'Connor, all addressed the assembly of survivors and victims, acknowledging the bravery of those who spoke out and the unacceptable failures of the government in keeping children safe.

This apology from parliament was to all victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in state institutions, following the hearings from the Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry.

The apology transcript can be found here:

https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources_2015/additional_releases/apology-to-victim-survivors-of-sexual-abuse-in-tasmanian-government-institutions

*If you would like support, please contact our
Redress Support Service team on 1300 364 277*

National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants, November 16, 2022

On 16th November, we paused and reflected on the apology made to the Forgotten Australians and former child migrants for the absolute tragedy of childhoods lost due to policies and procedures that ripped families and generations apart. Australia apologised for the ongoing impact of past forcible child removal from unmarried mothers, and the forcible relocation of child migrants. As an organisation, we recognise our role in our nation's journey towards reconciliation. At the centre of this is our commitment to embracing shared histories, maintaining meaningful connections, and supporting first nation communities throughout their journey of healing.

On November 16, 2022, Relationships Australia Tasmania, in the north of the state, together with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Council, hosted an event to remember the National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants and its ongoing acknowledgement of the devastation Australian history has made on survivors.

Hobart colleagues and clients joined via the internet and also formed part of the Forgotten Australians dislocation and separation experience.

The event was opened by Aunty Sharon which was followed by an address from Danny Gibson, Mayor of Launceston City Council.

Dave, who attended from the south, shared his vision and experience, along with Aunty Sharon and Aunty Rosemary who also had personal experiences to share.

Earlier in the year a project was undertaken in which some members of the Forgotten Australians group were able to share their experience on a video as well as sharing some of the long-term health and emotional impacts. The service videos that were developed were launched and we all watched the experiences together and learnt from them.

Following this, we had a sharing time for members to speak of their own individual experiences, during which we discussed support groups such as YourPlace.

The event closed as people continued sharing and connected over a delicious lunch prepared by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders Council.

Little Me

By David Blackwell

Running through paddocks having fun

Hiding in long grass from Dad and Mum

Catching yabbies is really neat

Being pushed into a creek

Being on a coach bus into town

Being myself without a frown

Going to the museum was so much fun

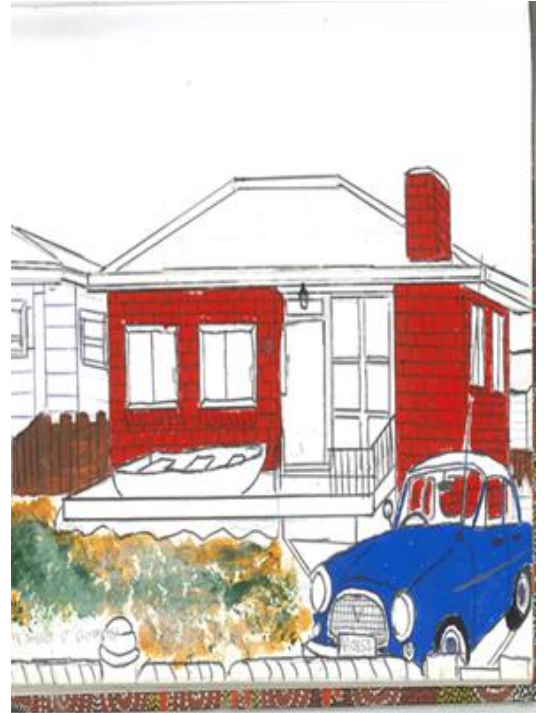
By myself without Dad and Mum

Going home having tea and bed

Going to sleep to clear my head

These are the things that I have done

When I was little it was so much fun





My name is Louise Sproule

This is my own colouring in picture, done by me, to say thanks and to all other

survivors,

take care and be good to yourself, as you travel down this winding road,

knowing you will come out the other side

Mother Impacted by Forced Adoption

By Robyn Cohen

Unmarried pregnancy changed me
At antenatal visits I felt ashamed
The staff deemed me unworthy
They said "the baby deserves the best"
They asked "what can you give the baby?"
As they branded me unfit to mother

My baby disappeared at birth
I cried and asked "what did I have"
They said "it's best if you don't know"
"It's best that you don't see the baby"
This thought was inconceivable
But she was inaccessible to me

They said "the baby needs two parents"
I was a mother but I was not
The days dragged by interminably
Driven to distraction by my need
I begged the staff to let me see her
When I finally held her I was numb

Without notice I was summoned
I signed the papers as I sobbed
She was gone before I knew her
Ward life continued normally
There was no escaping from babies
My presence was my badge of shame

My parenthood was terminated
Everybody said that this was best
Married parents waited in the wings
Life became indescribably surreal
A bewildering confusion of emotions
A part of me was lost along with her

The Lived Experience of Tasmanian Forgotten Australians Film Project

“A reflection piece by the project lead and a clinical practitioner supporting Forgotten Australians”

In 2022, Relationships Australia invested in making a series of short biopics telling the stories of Tasmanians who have been in state care up to and including 1989, AKA Forgotten Australians. It is fair to say that this was quite a leap for me, the six brave and generous volunteers agreed to share themselves and their story with the world.

Knowing enough about film making to know that we knew nothing, we figured the best way was to dive in. The first step was securing the wonderful Dane Meale and his production company Creative Grit to guide us through the process. Each participant was able to choose where their filming was performed, tell their story in their own words, and have final approval of how their interview was edited. Dane was patient and sensitive, but it still must have been quite an experience for each person as they chose to seat themselves in that central seat surrounded by a high-tech, fully equipped mobile studio set-up with lights, cameras, and audio gear in every direction. There was even a boom mic coming down on a stick like you see in the studio wide shots at the end of TV news. I think it would be hard to speak in that space without a very present sense of “going public” but each and every participant stepped up to it, and the amount of respect and appreciation I have for all that they shared is immense.

We can honestly say that the stories shared are the stories that tell the truth of what each featured Forgotten Australian experienced in care, and how it has shaped who they are today. To tell stories like these, you need to put yourself into a vulnerable space and connect with memories and feelings that for most of our participants are usually kept well to the side. Some had not even shared details with their close friends and family. I won't try to tell you what it was like for the participants, but I can tell you what it was like for me, and what I saw. I saw many deep breaths and closed eyes, some tears and a few extra coffee or cigarette breaks. I heard reflective

pauses, questions, and somehow more laughter than I had expected. I also heard hope. Some of our participants have worked for years to have their voices and stories heard, and others did so for the first time for this project. Awareness is wanted because change is needed. Future generations need to be protected, and current generations need to be cared for in a way that, for many, could be and needs to be better.

The videos from the launch can be viewed here:

<https://tas.relationships.org.au/useful-resources/>.

I think I can speak for all of us involved with the project when I say we are proud of what we have made, and we hope that you join us in getting these voices heard by as many people as possible.

Meet our counselling staff

North Team



Eve
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Gardia
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Lyndell
FASS



Meg
Find & Connect -
YourPlace



Cara
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect

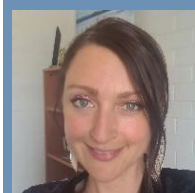
SOUTH TEAM



Alex
Redress



Angela
Redress, FASS
Find and Connect



Eliza
Redress, FASS
Find and Connect

Relationships Australia, Tasmania

www.tas.relationships.org.au
20 Clare St, NEW TOWN TAS 7008
6 Paterson St, LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
68 North Fenton St, DEVONPORT TAS 7310
admin@reltas.com.au
1300 364 277

Alliance for Forgotten Australians

forgottenaustralians.org.au
0488 460 646 or 0419 854 980
admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au

Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN)

www.clan.org.au
support@clan.org.au
1800 008 774 or 0425 204 747

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

www.tacinc.com.au
Hobart (03) 6234 0700 Burnie (03) 6436 4100
Launceston (03) 6332 3800
Free Call – 1800 132 260

Link-up Victoria (for Stolen Generations)

www.linkupvictoria.org.au
Free call: 1800 OUR MOB (1800 687 662)
03) 7002 3700 linkup@vacca.org

SASS (Sexual Assault Support Service)

www.sass.org.au
Hobart (03) 6231 0044
1800 697 877, 24-hour support

Laurel House (Sexual Assault Support)

www.laurelhouse.org.au
Northern Tasmania:
(03) 6334 2740
NW Tasmania:
(03) 6431 9711
1800 697 877, 24-hour support

Engender Equality

www.engenderequality.org.au
admin@engenderequality.org.au
(03) 6278 9090 (State wide)

Helplines:

Lifeline (24/7)
13 11 14

Beyond Blue helpline

(24/7) 1300 22 4636

Blueknot Helpline and Redress Support Service

(9am – 5pm, all days)
1300 657 380

My Support

(SASS and Laurel House 24/7 counsellors) 1800 697 877