

# YOURnewsletter

Autumn Edition

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 Autumn edition of YOURnewsletter. With daylight savings over for another year, evenings are drawing in and there is the cold chill in the air of the morning. However, we have been truly blessed with some spectacular Lutruwita, Tasmanian autumn days with clear blue skies and calm winds.

The tree's leaves transition into beautiful colours, the time of year where everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature has been saving up all year for the grand finale. The energy of autumn is about change and balance, an invitation to take a moment and slow down. A time to reflect, re-evaluate and nurture ourselves.

Again, there has been much activity across Redress Support Service, Find and Connect and Forced Adoption Support Service. The inaugural Art Therapy program has now concluded with some powerful pieces of artwork completed by the eleven participants of the program. The website to house images of the artwork is currently being built. Consultation on the design of this is happening through the Find and Connect Reference group, the FASS peer support group and the YourPlace peer support group.

The launch of 'The Voices of Forgotten Australians' was held at Henry Jones Hotel with a viewing of the Service Provider video compilation and a panel interview of all the participants of the project. The event received media coverage on WIN news, a great outcome for all involved.

Since the launch, videos have been used to provide educational workshops to Year 2 Medical students at University of Tasmania and the Council of The Aging Tasmania. Planning is underway to participate in Australian Nursing and Midwifery Aged Care conference and Your Say Advocacy. These are a fantastic resource which assists in educating the community about the often untold history of Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

A significant event has been held recognising the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Apology for Forced Adoptions, held at Parliament House in Canberra. Three members of the FASS peer support groups attended the event. More on this story further in the newsletter.

Now that we are into the fourth edition of the newsletter, we are seeking feedback. We would love to know what you think of YOURnewsletter. Please scan the QR Code below and share with us your thoughts.

YOURnewsletter



# 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

**17th May**

The State Government Apology to Former Wards of State Abused in 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

**26<sup>th</sup> May**

National Sorry Day- A Day of mourning and reflection about the Stolen Generation Practices

**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

**8<sup>th</sup> November**

State Government Apology to Victims and Survivors who experienced child sexual abuse in Tasmanian Government Institutions

# 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary- National Apology for Forced Adoptions

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023- Canberra

Mothers, adoptees, fathers, and families affected by forced adoption during the 1950s through to the 1980s were remembered in Parliament House Canberra as the Federal Government marked the tenth anniversary of the historic National Apology delivered by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Nicola Roxan, Minister for Health and Ageing spoke on behalf of Ms Gilliard. Three members, Robyn, Ann, and Pam, from Relationships Australia FASS Program attended with Eve Southwood, support person. A commemoration dinner was held at the National Portrait Gallery where there was a lot of passion, tears, and stories in the room.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese addressed the House in a compassionate and heartfelt acknowledgement on 21 March 2023, followed by a response from the Shadow PM Peter Dutton. Then on 22 March Amanda Rishworth, Minister Social Services, spoke followed by a response from Michael Sukkar, Shadow Minister Social Services. All Ministers addressed the unethical, hurtful, and lifelong pain of past adoption practices and how devastating it was that the Mother-Baby bond was broken, how so many mothers were pressured and coerced into giving up their newborn babies, and how women had their babies taken through immoral, unethical and above all illegal past practices. It was acknowledged that the pain and suffering, associated with forced adoption practices is lifelong and that the pain has not gone away. Some funding has been allocated in the hope that it will strengthen current supports available. One focus is to train aged care and allied health practitioners so they can deliver targeted, trauma-informed care for mums as they get older, allowing them to access appropriate care tailored to their needs. After decades of silence, people are starting to find their voice. At long last, they are starting to share their very sad stories and, hopefully, are on the journey to healing.



## Educational Workshop with University of Tasmania

On Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April, Dave Henderson and Anna Holliday (Relationships Australia Tasmania) facilitated a workshop to the group of **2<sup>nd</sup> Year Medicine students at University of Tasmania**. Held in the main lecture theatre at the Menzies centre in Hobart city campus, more than 50 students attended to learn about 'Social Accountability', including a focused presentation on the Forgotten Australians.

Upon arrival at the workshop, we asked students to vote to answer a question.....

### Do you know who the Forgotten Australians are?

Each student was given a sticky note and asked to place it on a whiteboard which had two columns, one for 'YES' responses and one for 'NO' responses. 50 students participated in this task, and the results are shown below...



The workshop was structured with a PowerPoint presentation, content gently introduced them to who the forgotten Australians are, and how our experiences differed to those of the Stolen Generation and Child Migrants. We also talked about the formal enquires, what those enquires revealed and how many Australians the term Forgotten Australian refers to.



# To my son

By Pamela Wells

If I could touch you again, I'd hold you tight in my arms  
If I could smell your baby soft skin and smell that new baby smell again, I would

If I could tell you I love, you one more time  
If I could hear those baby cries again, I would

If I could feel your heartbeat against mine again, just one more time, I would

They did want their babies  
They didn't sleep around  
I could have been a mother  
I did know my child's father  
No, I was engaged to him  
No, I wasn't the town bike  
No, I didn't give my baby away by choice  
I wasn't too young

One of the hardest things I had to do  
Is to grieve the loss of a son not once but twice  
Who is still alive today  
The adoptive person was not always loved

Of my flesh and bone  
Of bone of my bone  
But was miraculous my own  
For such a sort time  
Never forget even for a minute, year, or years

You are never forgotten and will always be in my heart  
You will be in my heart always  
Every single day that you are not with me  
I think about you  
I wonder what you are doing  
I hope you are safe and well and happy and had a good upbringing

Because I was your birth mum, I will always wonder and think of you

# Tasmanian Aboriginal Redress Support Service

Did you experience child sexual abuse?

Was an institution responsible for bringing you into contact with the person who abused you.

You may be eligible for a redress payment, counselling and psychological care services or an apology from the institution responsible for the abuse.

**START YOUR HEALING JOURNEY**

Connect with your free, local and confidential support service  
Tasmanian Aboriginal Redress Support | (03) 6131 4602 | Bron



# YOUR Place



YourPlace is a monthly peer support group for people that were Wards of the State, foster homes, group homes, orphanages, identify as Forgotten Australians, care leavers or had experiences as children in Australian Institutions.

YourPlace is a safe, relaxed space where there is no obligation to talk about what happened to you as a child but we are here to support each other. There is no judgement, it's safe to discuss whatever you like and your confidentiality is respected.

We meet each month in an environment that's easy, we have things in common and a shared understanding of what each other's going through. It's a chance to build our community, share ideas, support each other, listen, have a laugh and get the chance to be involved in projects like art therapy, family history, community days.

Our values are- appreciation, commitment, advocacy and caring about each other. The group meets at 20 Clare Street, Hobart and 6 Paterson St, Launceston every month. Tea, coffee and morning tea is provided.

## Upcoming YourPlace Group Sessions

### Hobart:

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 10am-12pm

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June, 10am-12pm

Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> July, 10am-12pm

Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 10am-12pm

Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> September 10am-12pm

Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> October 10m-12pm

Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> November 10am-12pm-

National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants (more details to be announced closer to the date)

Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> December 10am-12pm

End of Year lunch.

## Upcoming YourPlace Group Sessions

### Launceston:

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 12pm- 2pm

Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 12pm- 2pm

## It Didn't Start with You- A Book Review

This book discusses inherited family trauma and the psychological impacts that disruptions to the mother-child relationship may create

Feelings, stress responses, and how our genes express can be passed forward to our children and grandchildren, even though they didn't personally experience our trauma. In the same way, many of us relive the tragedies from previous generations and rarely make the link. Some examples from the book include:

- A woman who came to understand that her sudden indifference to her husband, was entangled with her grandmother who lost her husband tragically at the same age
- A Cambodian boy whose self-destructive behaviour was linked to the murder of his grandfather by the Khmer Rouge
- A woman with severe claustrophobia who made the connection to her grandparents who were killed in a gas chamber in World War 2
- A woman with a paralysing fear that her child would die discovered that her grandparents had lost two children who they never spoke of.

Author Mark Wolynn makes use of these real-life examples to help the reader understand the epigenetic and emotional trail left down through the generations. He explains that how understanding the family stories allows his clients to better interpret their own emotional responses and develop new ways of feeling about themselves and their stories from a place of understanding. Understanding our family histories with compassion for our forebearers provides greater wisdom and for many relief.

**If we are left with only fragments of our family of origin stories, there are still powerful understandings and an epigenetic trail of clues that can be deeply meaningful to us.**

For example, Wolynn explains how babies removed from their mothers may develop difficulties in the development of trust in other relationships through life. He then provides exercises to better understand our responses and offers strategies to overcome them and allow us to develop richer, stronger relationships.

The book leads readers through a process of self-discovery and healing, helping us identify the emotionally charged language of our worries and fears that link to unresolved traumas in childhood or family history. Through provocative questions, case studies and a series of body-centred exercises, readers are guided to investigate our family history and unearth aspects of family histories that may not have previously been considered and may hide useful insights toward personal healing. Readers learn how to convert old, fearful images into ones that bring strength and healing.

*It Didn't Start with You* offers step-by-step guidance to help people break the cycle of destructive inherited family patterns.

You will learn:

- How to identify inherited family trauma that lives in your anxious words, fears, behaviours, and unexplained physical symptoms.
- How to map out the traumatic events in your family history that keep the cycle of suffering alive from generation to generation.
- Practices, visualizations, healing sentences and other tools based on neurobiology that can help you disentangle from an inherited emotional legacy.
- How to create new neural pathways in your brain, new experiences in your body, and new vitality in your relationship with yourself and others.

I have found this book relevant to many of my clients. An emphasis placed on finding acceptance and compassion for the generations before opens up avenues for self-acceptance and avoiding the pain of the past from being inadvertently passed onto our children. I encourage anyone interested in inherited family trauma, from **relatives known or unknown**, to read this book and reflect on where the origin of those feelings may lie.

Written by Angela Reeve – RA Tas practitioner

## Alliance of Forgotten Australians Board Report

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April, the Alliance of Forgotten Australians Board met in sunny Brisbane for the first Board meeting of 2023. This Board meeting saw a jam-packed agenda across the 3 days. The Board and affiliate members were privileged to be able to visit Lotus Place, a dedicated support service resource centre for people who experienced abuse in an institutional setting including out-of-home care. Here at Lotus Place, the Chair of the Board Caroline Carroll provided an updated to the members of the Lotus Place community about AFA's current priorities.



*Photo: The Lotus Place community with the AFA Board and affiliate members*

Day Two of the Board meeting focused on hearing from State representatives with updates on advocacy work and priorities of each State. The Board looked forward at future advocacy priorities for Forgotten Australians before heading to Parliament House for the official launch of the newly developed website for the National Aged and Community Care Roundtable for Forgotten Australians which can be found here:

<https://www.forgottenaustraliansroundtable.com.au/>

The website was launched by The Honorable Leanne Linard MP, Minister for Children, Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. A powerful address was made by two Forgotten Australians highlighting the importance of understanding their issues in aging. Overall a wonderful event for the AFA Board to be present for.

There will be a focus on an update of the AFA website, whilst all Board members were present, with the beautiful backdrop of the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens, a photo shoot

was held. The updated images will be used to reinvigorate the website which can be found here: <https://forgottenaustralians.org.au/>

## Trauma Therapy Art Workshop

Forgotten Australians Recognition Project

February to March 2023- Moonah Arts Centre

### Well, that was *fun!*

A group of eleven art masters with the collaboration of practitioners - Eliza and Angela met over a 6-week period to participate in an innovative Trauma Therapy Art Workshop. Participants arrived at the fantastic Makers Studio at the Moonah Arts Centre a little nervous on their first day. They were provided with an art pack of beautiful quality materials, carefully selected to keep them inspired between sessions, and always available for creative experimentation when the inspiration strikes.

A little frustrated by the lack of structure of many of the art therapy interventions, Angela knew participants were capable of producing work they could be really proud of if given a little technical support. Angela developed a program drawing on her own arts practice, her love of abstract art as an accessible (scratchable, scapable, slopable, collagable, layerable) medium of expression, and cross-pollinated it with her experience as an EMDR trauma practitioner.

Abstract art allows access to art-making that is unrestricted by silly ideas, like 'I am not artistic because I can't draw'. Angela firmly believes that *everyone* has artistic ability with enough courage, opportunity, and encouragement. This was proven by the high engagement, sustained efforts and excellent results achieved by all participants through our program. Not only were the visual results strong, but a shared creative and supportive momentum was developed, powerful connections between participants grew, new skills and understanding about trauma was learnt and personal insights were gained. Plus, everyone fell hopelessly in love with Ned (the therapy dog).

An enormous thank you to all involved, including the wonderful Tim Pargiter our photographer and the MAC staff. Please send us any other master pieces you would like to share in the newsletter.

# 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

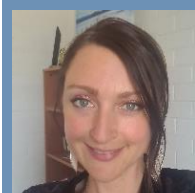
## SOUTH TEAM



**Alex**  
Redress



**Angela**  
Redress, FASS  
Find and Connect



**Eliza**  
Redress, FASS  
Find and Connect

### Relationships Australia, Tasmania

[www.tas.relationships.org.au](http://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](mailto:admin@reltas.com.au)  
1300 364 277

### Alliance for Forgotten Australians

[forgottenaustralians.org.au](http://forgottenaustralians.org.au)  
0488 460 646 or 0419 854 980  
[admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au](mailto:admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au)

### Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN)

[www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au)  
[support@clan.org.au](mailto:support@clan.org.au)  
1800 008 774 or 0425 204 747

### Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

[www.tacinc.com.au](http://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](http://www.linkupvictoria.org.au)  
Free call: 1800 OUR MOB (1800 687 662)  
03) 7002 3700 [linkup@vacca.org](mailto:linkup@vacca.org)

### SASS (Sexual Assault Support Service)

[www.sass.org.au](http://www.sass.org.au)  
Hobart (03) 6231 0044  
1800 697 877, 24-hour support

### Laurel House (Sexual Assault Support)

[www.laurelhouse.org.au](http://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](http://www.engenderequality.org.au)  
[admin@engenderequality.org.au](mailto: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