

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

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Significant Dates 2023 for people who spent time in Australian Institutions.....	3
Tribute to Peter Wilson.....	4
Forgotten Australian Resources.....	5
Forced Adoption Resources-Benevolent Society..	6
Oscar Wall Bio and Photography.....	7
Amazing Artwork by Embee'	8
Art Therapy Launch.....	10
Our Untold Stories Launch.....	11
Michael Grenfell, Adoptee Rights Advocate, Genealogist and Writer.....	12
Forgotten Australian Story- Your Place Member.....	15
Meet our staff and crisis support lines.....	16



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 Winter edition of YOURnewsletter. As the days were shorter and colder, slowness was noticed in the nature. A sense of hibernation was strong and was solidified as we see snow clad Mount Kunanyi. The energy of winter, like autumn is that of slowing down, and nurturing ourselves till the season of spring that invites openness.

In this weather, we also see wattle blooming which a reminder of resilience, beauty and spirit, held by our people. Almost in alignment with the changing weather our quarter has seen of a loss of one of our very valued members and voice of the program. Peter Wilson was one of the kindest and committed members of our Find and Connect program and community. We are indebted to his advocacy and support to bring forward the voices of Forgotten Australians.

The participants from the Find and Connect and Forced Adoption Peer support and Reference Group engaged with the team at Relationships Australia Tasmania to launch their artworks through the exhibition titled- Abstract Truth at Moonah Arts Centre, Nipaluna- Hobart. This launch was supported by the funding from the Department of Social Services and coordination by the team at Moonah Arts Centre.

To further the advocacy of our participants we also launched the website- Our Untold Stories with the exhibition. This website will be a digital house of the creative artworks and videos by the people with the lived experience of forced child removal practices in Australia.

With this newsletter we are also moving towards capturing more creative works from our community through the medium of artwork, poetry and/or story.



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, commemorating the 1967 Referendum and High Court Mabo Decision which granted Native Title Legislation

26th 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

8th November

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

In Loving Memory of Peter Wilson, who will be very missed for his kindness and generous commitment to the community of Forgotten Australians, especially through his contributions in the Find and Connect Reference Group.



Identity Cards- Forgotten Australians

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) have developed identity cards, to be used by Forgotten Australians when presenting to service providers or where they feel useful, to promote awareness of who Forgotten Australians are and for services to better their understanding and approach to working with Forgotten Australians.

They are an amazing initiative with a QR code that takes you to AFA's website to learn more about Forgotten Australians/ Care Leavers and the subsequent impacts the community faces, and resources for working with Forgotten Australians.

Feedback from the YourPlace Group has been very positive when using these cards, one community member said that their GP's attitude and understanding improved in her health care after presenting the card and another has said it's been good to show services so that they are sensitive to their traumas without having to tell their story again.

To receive one of these cards (pictured below) please call our Find and Connect team, 1300 364 277.

To learn more about the Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) visit their site:

<https://forgottenaustralians.org.au/>



I AM A FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIAN

*... one of an estimated 500,000 survivors of
 Australia's past child welfare system.*

Often the reality of our childhood was one of depravity, brutality, neglect, denial of basic human rights & physical, emotional & sexual abuse.

*Childhood trauma changes a child's development
 My childhood is part of who I am
 I carry the trauma of my childhood through many parts
 of my life
 It doesn't define me, but it can affect my ability to
 respond rationally to stressful situations*



Adoption Resources- The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society have a page on their site specifically dedicated to supporting the community to navigate the complexities of adoption in Australia and be supported by the impacts of forced adoption practices, enabled by adoption policies of the last century.

“We have an extensive body of knowledge and expertise on the effects of adoption across the life span; the process of accessing adoption records, finding and contacting family; and managing post reunion relationships. We have developed a wealth of Information and Resources for people affected by adoption; including people who have been adopted, parents who have lost children through adoption, adoptive parents, siblings, partners and others who have been separated from family.”

Resources range from Information Sheets on topics specific to people impacted by adoption; to videos and books, research, conference presentations, advocacy submissions and Best Practice Guides for health and counselling professionals.”

<https://www.benevolent.org.au/services-and-programs/post-adoption-services/information-and-resources>



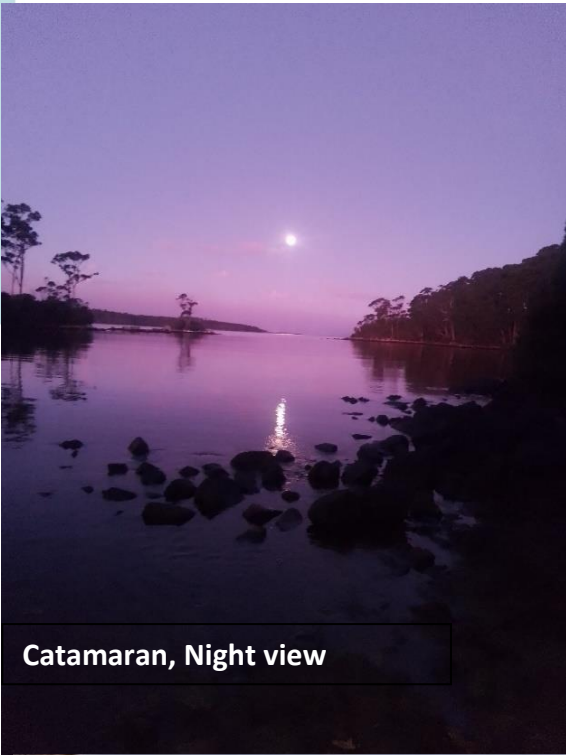
Oscar Wall Bio and Photography

My name is Oscar Wall, I am a Forgotten Australian.

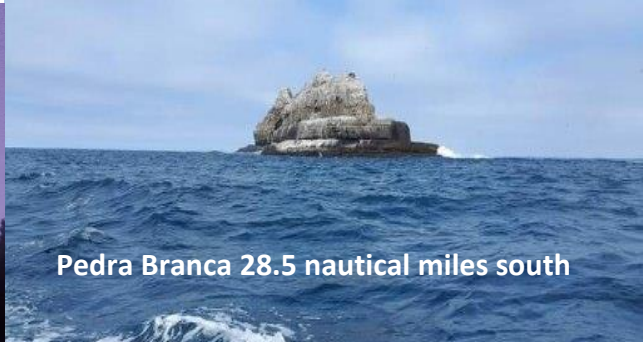
I am also a member of the Your Place Group, I have been coming to the Group in the South over the last 6 months. I enjoy attending because it's important to get recognition for what you've been through, and for the knowledge we have about growing up in Government homes.

I feel understood, and it's a good opportunity to offload. The other members are relatable, we enjoy having a good laugh and sharing what we're doing. The group helps me be more social.

I use photography to capture positive memories, and for making meaning in my life, connecting me to people and places. I photograph my fishing, boating and camping trips. I love the peace and freedom of being on the water, all your worries go away, the tranquillity of nature.



Catamaran, Night view



Pedra Branca 28.5 nautical miles south



My best support friend



Rainbow



Dinner!

Amazing Artwork by Embee’- Talented Your Place Group member

“The artwork is about Mt St Canice and what it was like to live there, and the other piece is about what life looks like now.”

Image one: Mount St Canice

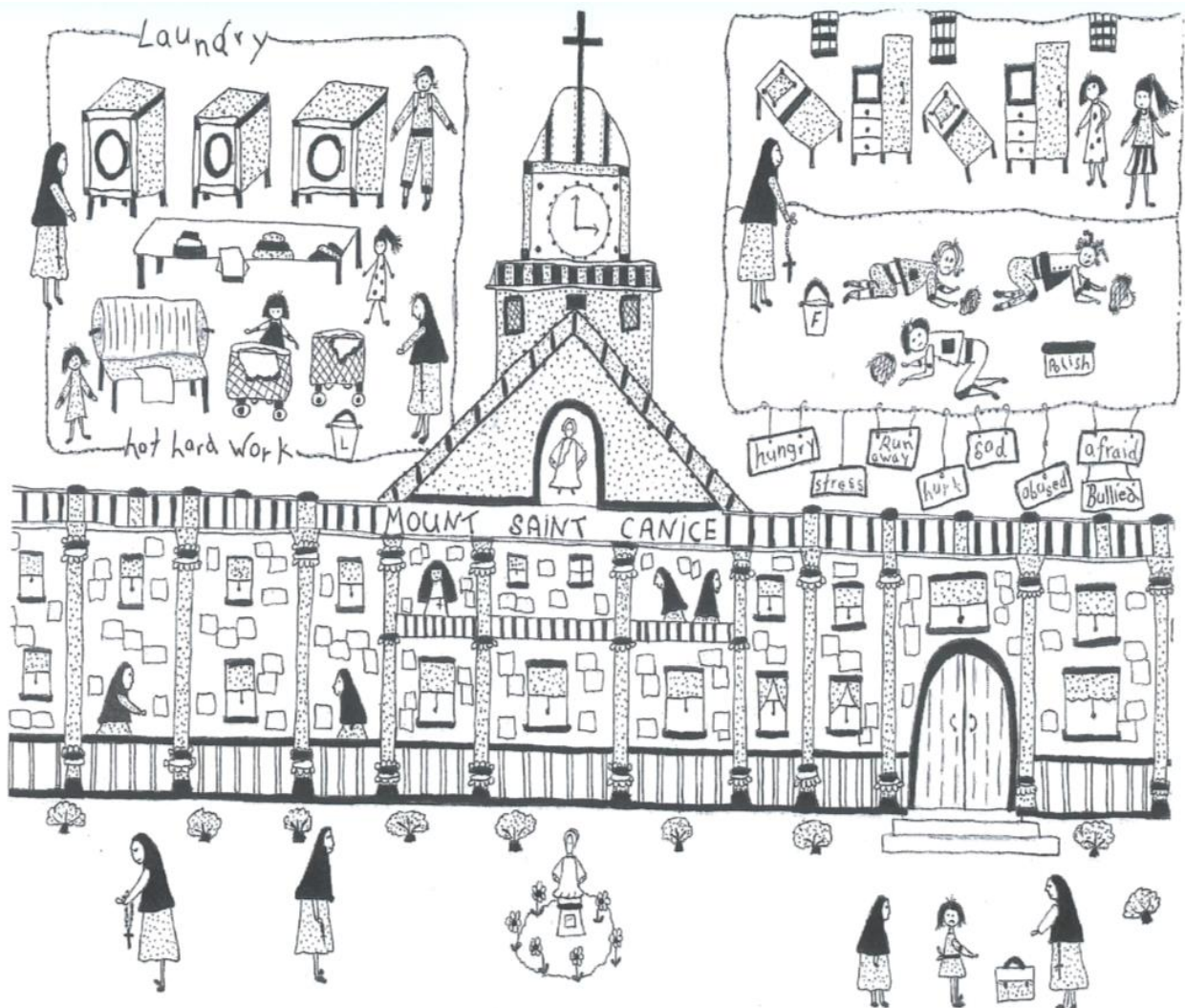
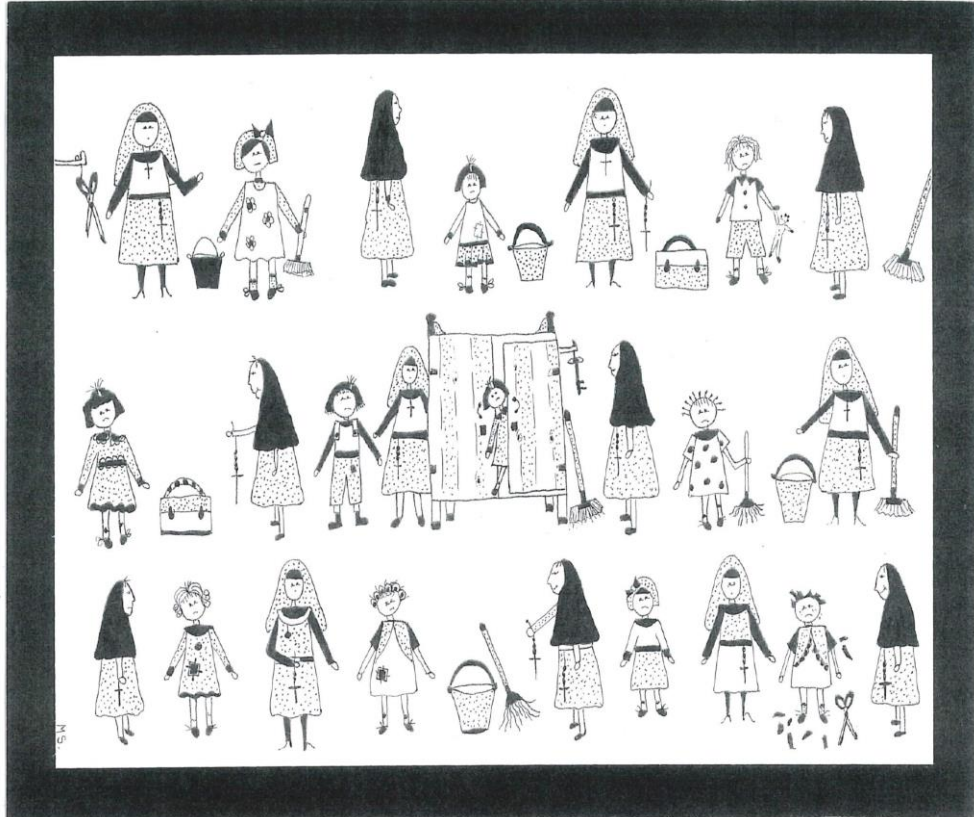
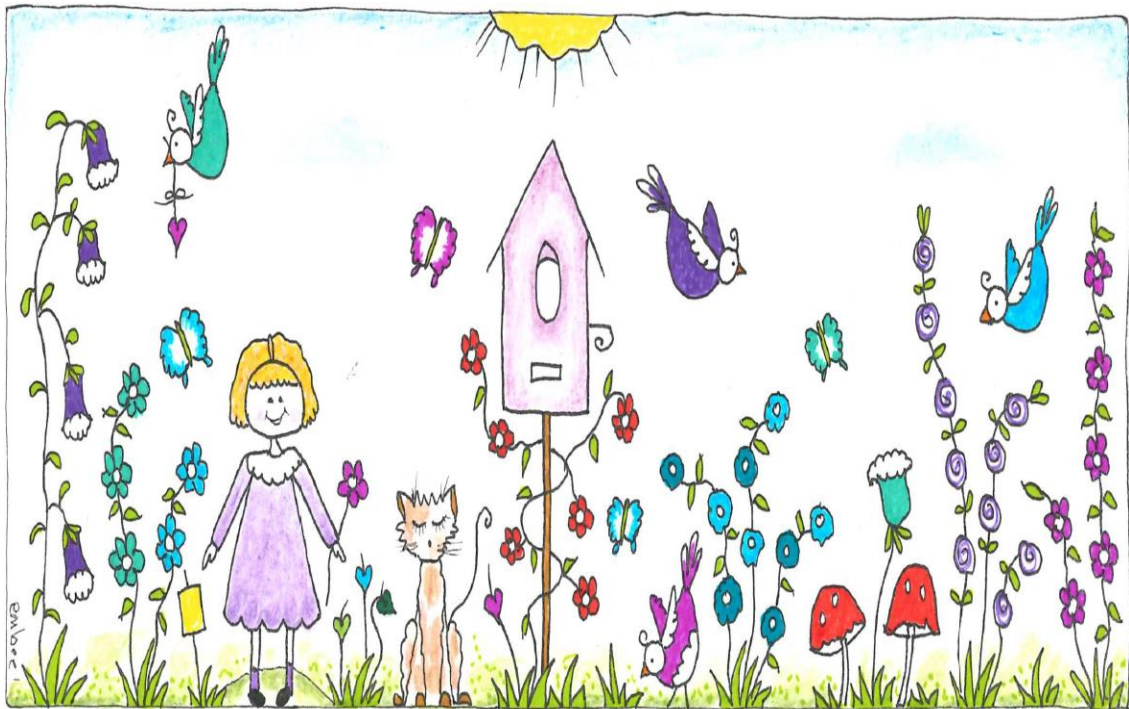


Image two: Before and After

Before



After



Launch of Abstract Truth and Our Untold Stories

Thursday the 14th of August, we celebrated the opening of the Exhibition Abstract Truth, featuring the artwork and launch of an online library of resources, creative pieces and videos from community members who are Forgotten Australians and people impacted by Forced Adoptions. This work was supported by funding from Department of Social Services as part of the Recognition Project.

The launch was very well attended by the participants, broader members of the community impacted by Forced Adoptions practices and those who identify as Forgotten Australians, as well as many members of the public. Abstract Truth was exhibited alongside creative works from The Migrant Resource Centre, and art installations about Metamorphosis and Engineering.

They are truly moving artistic and written pieces that shed light on the experiences of many in our community and their fierce resilience after enduring so much. It is a MUST see!



ABSTRACT TRUTH

Survivors of Australia's Child Removal Practices

Babies taken from their mother's arms at birth. Fragmented, pre-memory imprints of confusion and loss. Abstract Truth is an exhibition of abstracted works that share the multilayered complexities and personal courage to reframe the deepest identity injury, the survival of child removal practices. These artworks were created through the Trauma Focused Art Therapy Group under the auspices of Relationships Australia Tasmania and the Find and Connect Program.

Exhibition Dates: Friday 15 September - Saturday 14th October
Moonah Arts Centre, 23-27 Albert Rd, Moonah TAS 7009

Relationships Australia
TASMANIA



Scan this QR Code to access our new website- codesigned with members of the Find and Connect and Forced Adoptions Support Services Reference Group

OUR UNTOLD STORIES

Survivors of Australia's Child Removal Practices



FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS, CARE LEAVERS, FORCED ADOPTIONS, STOLEN GENERATIONS, FORMER CHILD MIGRANTS

This website is about people... people who have survived the Australian child removal system.

The practices of separating over half a million children from their families spanned generations and will go on to have generational consequences.

This is a space where people don't have to feel alone, can share their stories and are finally able to speak.

Relationships Australia
TASMANIA



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Meet Michael Grenfell: *Author - Poet and Adoptee Rights Advocate*

Michael Grenfell: Author - Poet and adoptee rights advocate (Committee member Adoptee Rights Australia) uses writing and poetry as a tool for expressing his experiences and a vehicle for finding meaning.

Michael is a member of the Australian Adoption Literary Festival Working Group.

My Rationale regarding Creative Writing

Any creative outlet, be it painting, drawing, writing or singing can be extremely beneficial.

What has been important to me in regard to my writing (poetry) is that I have been able to put into words difficult thoughts and feelings I had otherwise been unable to communicate clearly.

The resulting catharsis has allowed me to relocate onto the printed page some of the previous pain and difficulty I felt that I carried with me daily.

The best part for me is being able to communicate with others and that what I have written has had a positive effect.

Those of us who have experienced trauma may be fearful of starting something new or be concerned about what others may think.

Unfortunately, we are inundated by messages daily that we should always excel and do our best.

This does little to help when trauma is part of our history and just adds to the list of demands placed upon us.

What does help though is simple kindness, with the first person we need to offer this too is ourselves.

With this form of Self-care in mind, a true intention, you may be surprised by what you can create.

This was my experience and whatever artistic medium you decide on, I wish you the absolutely very best.

I share my story of searching and navigating secondary rejection with creative writing as an outlet.

My episode can be heard here-

<https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/id/27533715>

The poem below was in response to the simple prompt 'Why I write poetry'.

I feel this may resonate because of the local references and may also operate in giving prompts to others upon reading for their own practice.

I will be reading this via zoom as part of adoptee remembrance day this year.

<https://adopteemembranceday.com/what-is-adoptee-remembrance-day-october-30th/>



Why I write poetry

Because of 3am questions that storm through my mind, attempting to find the truth or a picture of it,

Because of the Bass Strait and it's crooked distance,

Because of dropped phone calls and returned letters,

Because of custard tarts and many false starts,

Because of rabbit shaped easter biscuits,

Because of what was told,

Because of what was shared and what was taken,

Because of institutions filled with children, innocent and alone,

Because we are running out of time,

Because it is write or die,

Because of bent and broken backs,

Because of Bushy Park cemetery and what is buried there,

Because of paranoid people in positions of power,

Because of David,

Because of Geoff,

Because they are gone.

A Simple Piece of Paper

I was born into paper

Not into my mother's arms

Two parents divided

One who sang the psalms

Two families unknowing

Have lost one of their kin

But with a piece paper
Get told to begin again

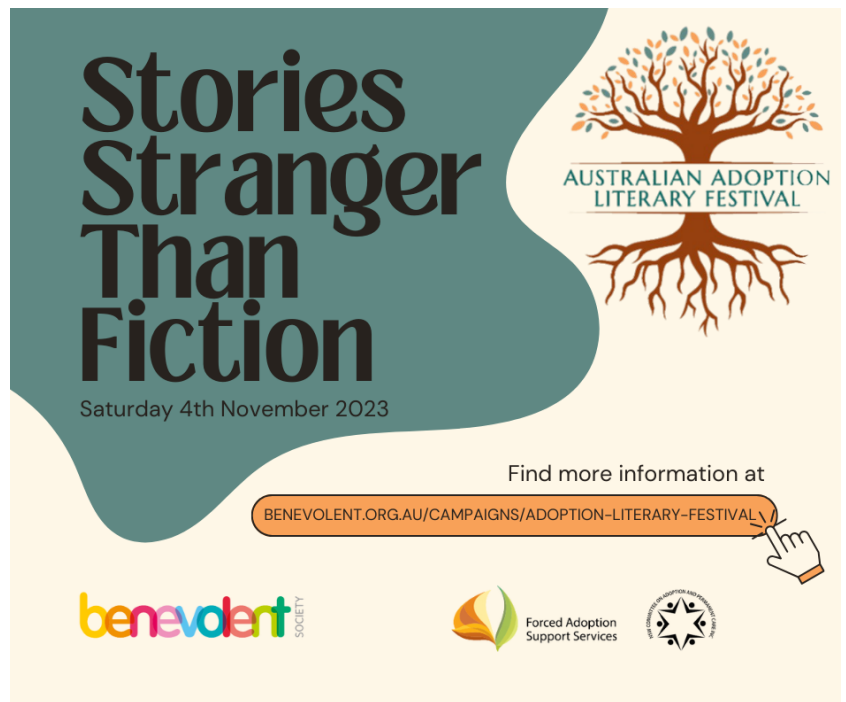
A new name is chosen
An old one then denied
Another piece of paper
An identity to hide

A father unnamed
No accountability
A blemish removed
From the family tree

Another piece of paper
With it's undeniable proof
A damning piece of evidence
That finally tells the truth

The story I was given
Was missing crucial parts
It left out all the history

And removed all the hearts



Save the date for the first inaugural Australian Adoption Literary Festival, Saturday
Nov 4th 2023, 9:30am - 2:30 AEDT



This is an online and free event with bookings made via the link below:
<https://www.benevolent.org.au/services-and-programs/post-adoption-services/adoption-literary-festival>

Forgotten Australian Story- Your Place Member

As part of “Your Place, a place where we feel comfortable, we all have something in common, and in no way feel obligated to talk of our time in “care”.

We talk about anything really, always have a laugh, our small group have become really good friends.

I feel there’s may Forgotten Australians out there that would benefit by being part of “Your Place”, no matter what type of situation you were in while in “care”.

My husband and I have been going to “Your Place for around 10 years, maybe more.

It is a happy place, just like a garden where one can smile for a little while.

Also, the morning tea is really lovely too.

Written by A Forgotten Australian with lived Experience



Relationships Australia Tasmania run monthly peer support groups for Forgotten Australians, Care Leavers- anyone who was in a Children’s Home, Foster Care, Orphanage or Institution as a child before 1989.

The groups are relaxed, free to attend and confidential. Morning tea is provided.

Interested in coming along? Great! Please call 1300 364 277 and ask to speak to one of our workers from Find and Connect.

Meet our counselling staff

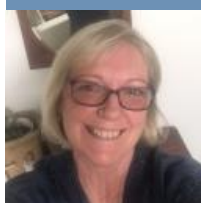
North Team



Eve
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Gardia
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Lyndell
FASS

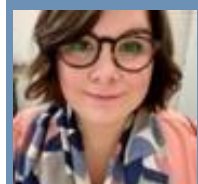


Meg
Find & Connect -
YourPlace



Cara
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect

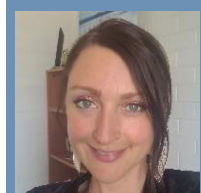
SOUTH TEAM



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