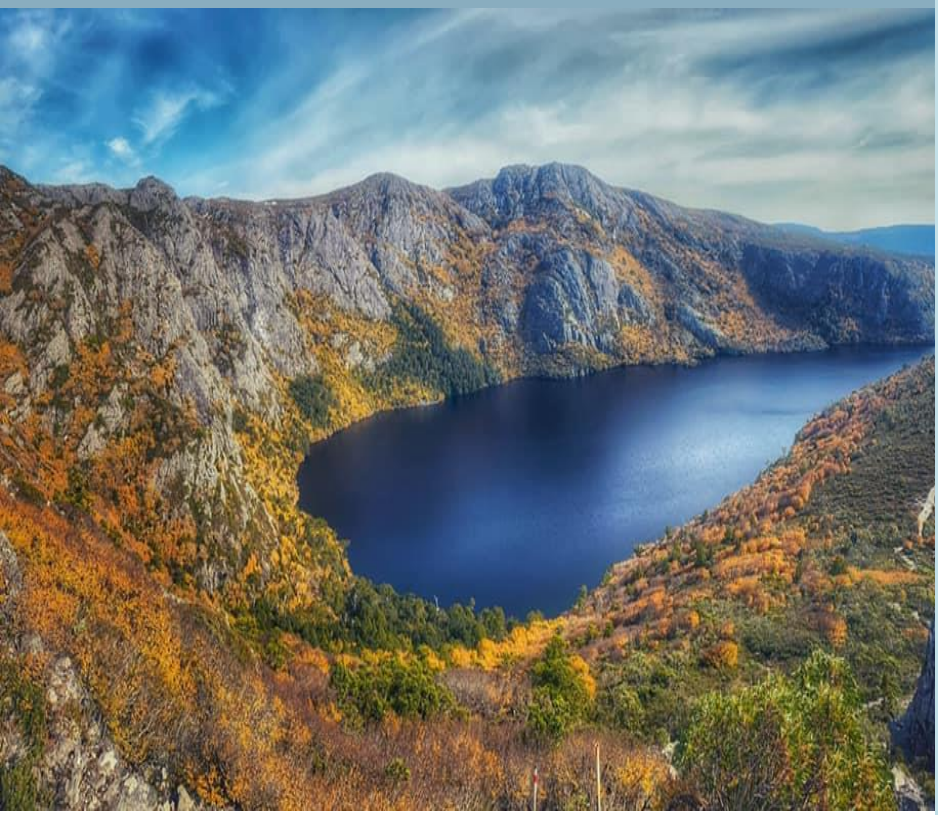
YOURnewsletter

Autumn Edition 2025

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 3

Community Profile- Viv Blackwell 4

Poems by Marina Colne 7

Updates from North-West Forced Adoption

Support Services Peer Support Group 10

Alliance for Forgotten Australians Board visits

Forgotten Australians in Hobart 12

Meet our Counselling Staff 14

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 2025 edition of ***Your Newsletter*** a publication created for and with people who have experienced institutional or out-of-home care, and those who support them. This space is about staying connected, informed, and heard. It celebrates lived experience, community strength, and the power of sharing our stories. In this edition, we're proud to share the story of Viv Blackwell, who reflects on healing, learning, and connection and the role that community, music, and even his dog Ned have played along the way. We're also grateful to feature poetry by Marina Colne, whose words capture both struggle and beauty with honesty and heart. We hear from the North-West Forced Adoption Peer Support Group and explore how books, storytelling, and creativity bring people together. You'll also read about the recent visit from the Alliance for Forgotten Australians Board to Hobart an important opportunity for people to speak up, be heard, and help shape the future. This newsletter is a reminder that no matter your story, you are part of a caring, resilient community.

Significant Dates for People who have spent time in Australian Institutional Settings

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, commemorates the 1967 Referendum and High Court Mabo Decision which granted Native Title Legislation
6th July to 13th 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

Community Profile: Viv Blackwell

"I grew up in New Norfolk, Tasmania in the 1960's. In the times where they grew hops in The Lachlan. I would go to the Lachlan hall every month, where they played country music – this is where I learned to dance – some boot scootin' !!

Ned, my dog, fills my life like its full of dance, he cheers me up! Ned loves to see me happy. I love Ned and looking after him – he's my travel partner and a regular member of the group too!

I've had a difficult childhood with very complex family dynamics and was sent into care for two years as a result of that. That time ripped my family apart. Sometimes I wish it didn't happen! Makes me think of how life could have turned out otherwise and the opportunities that I missed.

Growing up, schooling wasn't easy for me and I had bad experiences – which led me to miss out on a lot of my education. Now, I do adult education every Friday – since over 3 years, it's the 26Ten program. I took 9 months off when I had a surgery due to stomach problems. It's had its challenges, some days I've walked away feeling really confused, probably because I get a bit anxious going in there. Then the next week I go in and I am achieving and that's a great feeling to have – to be able to spell!! The teachers are very lovely, and I've been lucky to have found a good one."



Photo of Viv

"In the future, one of my goals is that I want to do course in Uni to be an Audio Electrician.

From all of my life experiences of mental health struggles - I just want to help others feel better, because I know how it feels. The anxiety and depression can really take a toll on you.

When I'm having bad days, I get some counselling. I've always thought that talking about it is the better way to go. Sometimes I go for a walk on the river. I like the esplanade. I also go weekly to the city for karaoke nights! "



Photo of Ned



Viv on a bike

"I've always enjoyed bike riding. I used to go bike riding with Sally, my elder sister. As kids we got a dragstar bike for Christmas, mine was a blue seat one and she got the one with flowers on the seat. Sally passed away 8 years ago, I still miss her. .

I still like to go out on my e-bike, Ned likes to come with me. Sometimes I can be biking about for two hours, thanks to pedal assist! I meet my friends for a cuppa. I put my air pods in for music – it feels like I'm in a concert, it relaxes me.

I've been attending the Your Place group for two years now."

"I look forward to coming to the group. It makes me happy for that day - seeing me old friends again. It's people that have been through similar things. I can talk about things I can't talk about otherwise, these people understand. "



Photo of Viv on e-bike with Ned

"The group has kept me going. Everyone gets to share their opinion and story. I've had my days when I get a bit shy, but I love talking and often get a song in as well! I look forward to seeing the group once a month, it cheers me up.

To any new person wanting to attend, I would say: Go for it! It gives you a chance to express yourself. Makes you want to mingle more with others. I go away feeling good and that I'm needed in the community again.

Try and do good in the community and good will come back to you, in unexpected ways..."

Poems by Marina Colne

I am

a watcher of walls

a starer at ceilings

a stealthy darkness

a blanket to feelings

I stalk with danger

mercy, a stranger to me

I strike down

I am depression

Poems by Marina Colne

She

has just stopped.

out for a moment

to follow that man

whose dark back

swings as he leaves

the crowded room

she slips after him

will fit unselfconsciously

into the space at his side

become the perfect partner

as he was for her when

they danced just now

she is gone

into his life for

a quarter century of hers

she has stepped out

for a moment

she won't be back for years

Poems by Marina Colne

Swans

the nesting swans at the river

are a sign my God for to thank

but I find I'm not nearly so grateful

for their poo on the grassy bank.

Marg

Smothering my hands

with white diamonds

I remember you

giving me this gift

from your Christmas excess

take it, you said

and laughed, lamenting

that mother's day

would bring you more such

than you could ever use

it's almost a year

since you left us

every night

the fragrance of my hands

brings you back.

Updates from North-West Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS) Peer Support Group

Most of the members of North-west peer support group enjoy reading and some love to write 😊

At the recent group meeting, conversations turned to favourite authors, and genres, ranging from true crime, thrillers, non-fiction and romance.

The group discussed that reading books, listening to pod-casts, and audio books (free through the state-library), provide a wonderful outlet and a place of flow, enjoyment and learning.

“Writing stories and compiling these with historical family photos brings a sense of connection and can be an enjoyable past-time” said one of the group members.

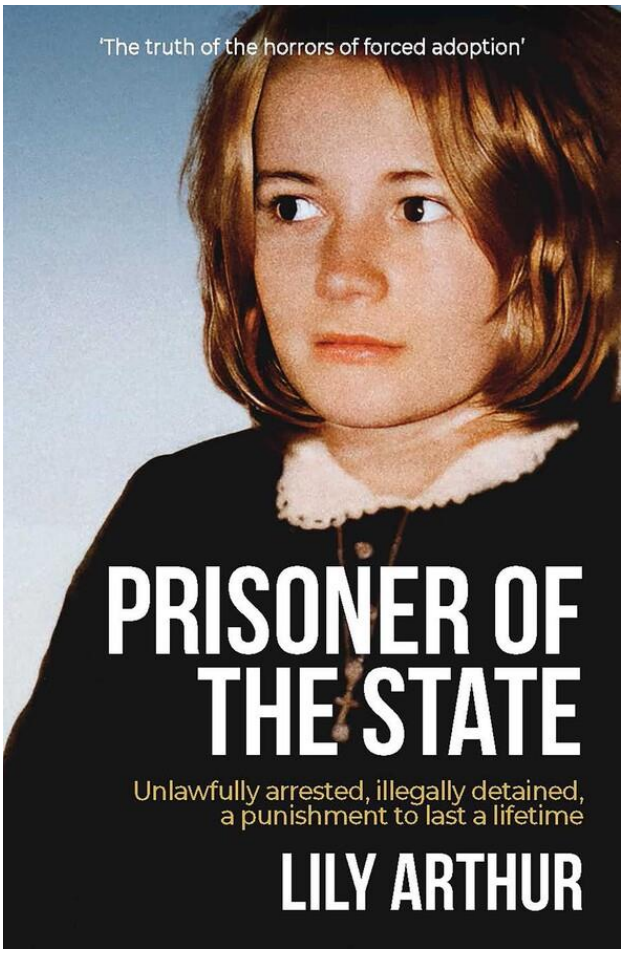
Some of the authors discussed yesterday were:

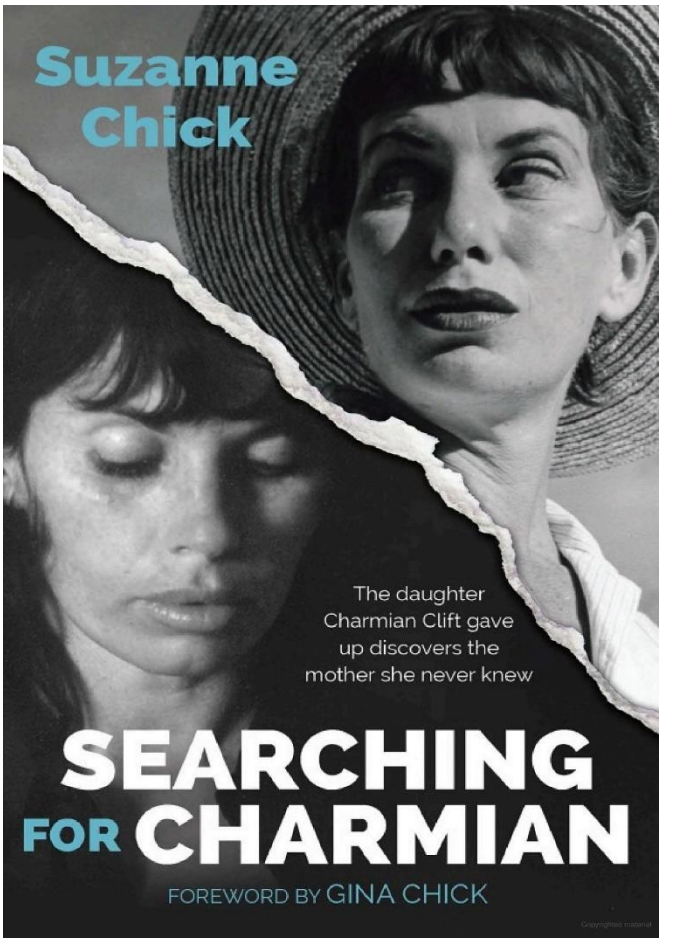
- Lily Arthur
- Suzanne Chick
- Jodi Picoult
- Chris Carter
- Candice Fox
- Allen Harlen-Corbin
- Jo Dixon
- Kate Morton
- Lisa Jewell

The group oversees the FASS library which has collection of books curated by the peer-support group.

To this growing library two new books have been added. These books are available to be borrowed across the state.

For anyone interested in borrowing these books, please contact Lyndell via admin@reltas.com.au





New books added to FASS Library

Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) Board visits Forgotten Australians in Hobart



There was a great opportunity for Forgotten Australians to meet with AFA board members in Hobart.

The event was scheduled on the second day of the AFA Forum, which was held between 5–7 March, 2025. Around 15 Forgotten Australians were present at RA Tas offices, including a small group who had driven down from Launceston, demonstrating their commitment to the visit.

The board was welcomed to the New Town site by Tasmanian AFA board member, Dave Henderson. The board took the opportunity to have an informal conversation about its work and the Forgotten Australians present asked questions and made suggestions about things they saw as a priority.

The Forgotten Australians present also took pride in sharing artwork created during art therapy programs, highlighting some of the activities done through peer support groups.

Some even made small gifts for board members, such as bracelets and beautifully hand drawn ‘Hug’ cards that can be given as a sign of love and support to people who do not like to be hugged or touched.

The board then shared information about the work they are doing with Wintringham as an affordable option for Forgotten Australians for housing and as an option to consider as they age.

Discussions were held about the needs for Forgotten Australians who are now ageing and the concerns they have about going into aged care – another institution.



Visits such as these are valuable. They provide board members with an opportunity to connect with Forgotten Australians around the country to not only share the advocacy work AFA is doing on their behalf, but also as a way for the board to hear about priorities in different states. It ensures the board's priorities reflect input from Forgotten Australians nationwide.



Meet our counselling staff

North/North-West Team



Gardia
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Lyndell
FASS



Cara
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Maria
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect

South Team



Alex
Redress Senior
Practioner



Sylvia
Redress, FASS,
Find & Connect



Aishwarya
Redress, FASS,
Find & 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
1300 364 277 / admin@reltas.com.au

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 (statewide)

Helplines:

Lifeline (24/7) - 13 11 14

Beyond Blue helpline (24/7) - 1300 224 636

Blueknot Helpline & Redress Support Service
9am-5pm, Mon-Fri - 1300 657 380

MySupport (SASS & Laurel House 24/7 counsellors) – 1800 697 877