



Annual Report 2015

Jigsaw Queensland Inc.

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*Providing support, information and referral for
39 years to people affected by adoption.*

We thank everyone for their kind donations throughout the past year and acknowledge the wonderful support from our local Grill'd at Fortitude Valley.

Jigsaw Queensland Inc receives funding from



**Forced Adoption
Support Services**

Funded by the Australian Government
Department of Social Services



**Queensland
Government**

President's Report

What a difference a year can make!

Changes to Electoral Roll access and BDM

Last year I commenced my report by referring to a number of submissions we had made to various policy reviews. It is pleasing to report that as a result of successful lobbying by post-adoption providers nation-wide the Commonwealth Electoral Rolls have now been re-opened for public searching. The Queensland government review of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act continues; however, we met with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to dialogue on current issues for people affected by adoption; for example, original birth certificates, adding information to original birth certificates and death certificates. It is pleasing to report that senior BDM staff are aware of how important these issues are and they will continue to keep in touch as further issues emerge. Uniform national policy regarding more suitable forms of original birth certificate seems way in the future in our federal system, where each state must agree to a common approach.

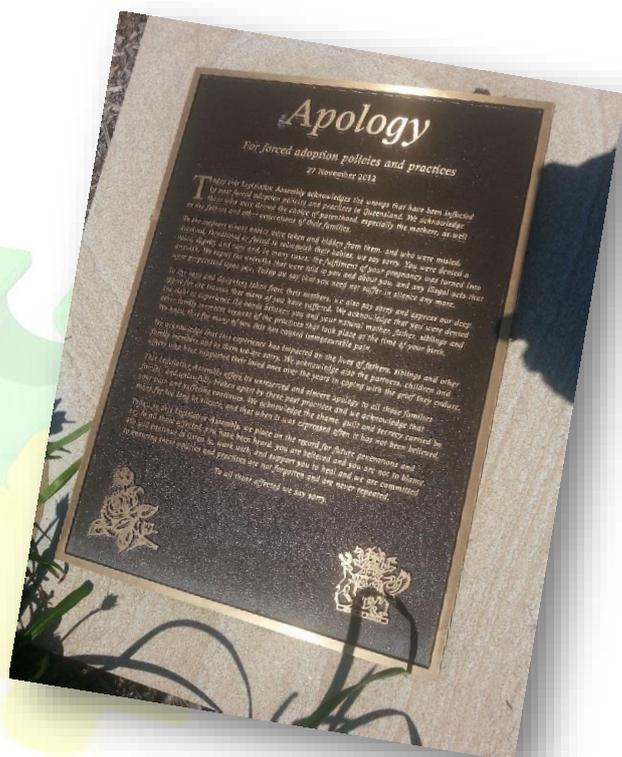
Jigsaw workshop program

In October and November with the assistance of Susan Kelly we ran a series of workshops focusing on various stages of the adoption journey, from understanding adoption information and records, through search and reunion and its aftermath. The workshops were highly interactive and prompted some participants to take further steps in their information and emotional journeys. We will definitely be offering these workshops from time to time again in the future.

Apology anniversary of memorial

Leading up to the second anniversary of the Queensland Government's apology for past forced adoption in November, we participated in discussions with other stakeholder about the style and location of a suitable permanent

memorial to past forced adoption. The consensus was that a plinth and plaque with the words of the apology in a tea-rose garden setting in Roma Street gardens would be appropriate. The memorial was unveiled by the then Minister for Child Safety, Ms Tracey Davis, on the 27 November, the second anniversary of the state government apology. The Department kindly provided marquees and refreshments to make it a fitting occasion in a pleasant and tranquil location.



Forced Adoption Support Service

In December we received news that our tender to provide services in Queensland to those affected by forced adoption had been successful. The Commonwealth Department of Social Services will fund us to provide information, support and referral services for the next three years. All other FASS state tenders were fulfilled by Relationships Australia. I think it is a testimony to Jigsaw Queensland reputation, and good management and our sound and effective model of trained peer support that helped us

to achieve this recognition. We commenced the service in March 2014 with the appointment of Susan Kelly, formerly of PASQ, as the FASS team leader. With the able assistance of Emma Keune, also formerly of PASQ, we were able to rapidly establish the service.



The FASS service has necessitated many practical changes at Jigsaw Queensland as we combine volunteer and paid staff to deliver a 9-5, five days a week service. The FASS service is required us provide appropriate face-to-face support, so we have expanded into another room in SANDS House. As well as providing information, support and referral we are also now required to provide assistance with searches if requested, which is a change from our recent Jigsaw Queensland model of helping clients to conduct their own searches.

The FASS program will also require us to work closely other peer support and advocacy groups to ensure that the aims of the program are met. As part of our funding we are required to administer a small grants program to increase the capacity of these groups to offer peer support for those affected by past forced adoption. As the FASS services commenced nation-wide, Jigsaw Queensland has taken on a training role at the national level with Susan Kelly co-facilitating) a national workshop for the FASS providers.

We are finding that many folk with a previous connection with Jigsaw are re-connecting with us, taking advantage of the 9-5 service. As mentioned in our newsletters, the FASS service is very inclusive, as the Senate Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Past Forced Adoption determined that as well as direct force and illegal practices, the environment of family and professional

pressure was such that consents taken could not be called truly informed or freely given by today's standards. Also, there is the very practical issue that until one that awareness of whether the adoption was forced or not is not clear to many clients as they start their current adoption journey.

FASS launch by the river



We were pleased that Senator Claire Moore, who was on the Senate Inquiry committee, was available to help us launch the Queensland FASS service by the banks of the Brisbane River in May. Former Senator Susan Boyce, who was also on the Senate Inquiry committee, also provided bi-partisan support for what was a lovely afternoon. Coming immediately after volunteer week, we took the opportunity to combine the occasion with a combined with an appreciation for the work of our volunteers.



New office workers

With the FASS office established and information and communication technology sorted out we added two FASS workers, Chris Mundy and Peta Jamson to the Jigsaw team. With this full complement of FASS workers and trained Jigsaw volunteers we will always be able to answer all inquiries and in most cases we will be able to provide assistance to two callers at a time. We also now have the capacity to supervise a social work student placement for specific projects. Our first project will focus on the information and support needs of those impacted by affected by donor insemination.

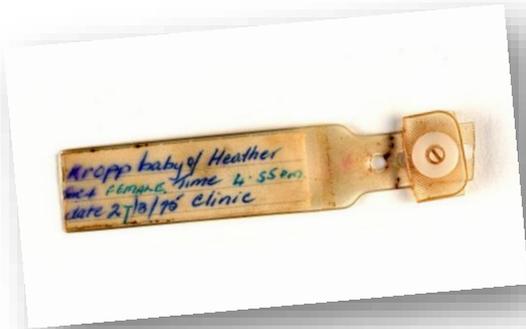


National Archives exhibition

In 2014 we continued to participate in the National Archives workshops relating to the Forced Adoption History Project, both the website and the exhibition, *Without Consent: Australia's Past Adoption Practices*. Trevor and Susan attended the opening of the exhibition in Canberra, where Trevor was also invited to be on a panel discussion entitled 'What does a National Apology mean?'. He also attended the official launch of the exhibition by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who spoke movingly of her memories of the day of the National Apology and the impact it had on her of meeting with many of those who attended. Some Jigsaw members have provided personal items to the exhibition. A contribution from Heather (see picture) was displayed prominently in the exhibition as was a Jigsaw banner from 1992. Satellite exhibitions will be touring the

country with some scheduled for regional Queensland. We will pass on details when they are released. Susan was at the concurrent viewing of the official launch of the exhibition at the National Archives at the Cannon Hill site to provide support for those attending.





Engaging with Post-Adoption Service providers

We continue to work closely with other post-adoption service providers in Queensland, government and non-government, to coordinate services and to prevent duplication; in particular, PASQ for counselling and mediation and Salvation Army for mediation, Link-Up Queensland for clients with an indigenous background, Lotus Place for Forgotten Australians and Adoption Services in the Queensland Government. We also participate in the national post adoption service providers meetings, which are held roughly annually.

We continue our positive and constructive engagement with Adoption Services Queensland. We have noticed the impact of, and welcomed the recent change in policy and practice that now sees the release to adoptive persons of 'putative fathers' names. We are receiving more requests for information about birth fathers and how to search for them. The Adoption Act 2009 is also currently being reviewed and we will continue to provide feedback and advice to the department suggesting improvement based on our experience of the current provisions. Our service agreement to provide information, advice and referral to individuals impacted by adoption with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has been renewed until 2017.

Support groups growing

Given the recent changes in our levels of service provision it is perhaps not surprising that the number of persons attending our support meeting has been increased in the first half of 2015. Most gratifyingly some of our committed attendees have taken the next step and committed to the Helping Skills course. Recently, Jenny Watkins has been facilitating the course and providing peer supervision of volunteers. Sadly for us, Jenny is not able to continue in these roles and Susan will be taking over responsibility for both in the future. We thank Jenny for her valued contribution to sustaining the focus of our caring work at Jigsaw and look forward to continuing to draw on her wisdom and experience on a more ad hoc basis in the future.

Social media

We actively use social media to increase our networks of communication and to engage with those affected by adoption. We do not run online support groups, but rather use social media to provide information and inspiration for each individual's journey. Personal issues are dealt by email and messaging rather than on the public areas of social media sites. To avoid internet trolls and free-for-alls, we continue a conservative and vigilant social media engagement, utilising Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. We have increased the use of unique graphic material kindly supplied by artist and illustrator Teresa Jordan to grab attention and add a distinctive visual style to Jigsaw's posts.

Ongoing fundraising

Recent grants have put us in a very sound financial position for the next few years, but these projects are time-limited. We continue to seek other sources of funding, memberships, donations, and opportunities to raise funds for Jigsaw activities. For example, we recently participated Grill'd Burgers New Farm Local Matters fundraising initiative. We also applied to Jetstar

(unsuccessful) and the Community Gaming Benefit Fund (still to hear back) for support to increase our volunteer base throughout regional Queensland. If members hear of suitable grants or fundraising opportunities please let us know and we will follow them up. It is perhaps timely to reiterate that all donations to Jigsaw Queensland are now tax deductible.



Our aims remain the same

While the funding for FASS services and new levels of accountability for non-profit organisation has required us to increase the sophistication of our financial controls, digital record-keeping and office management, these changes have proceeded well thanks to both Susan, as FASS team leader and Heather, as Jigsaw volunteer coordinator, and Collette, Melissa and Jenny on the Management Committee.

Throughout this significant period of change we have been guided by the values and ideals put in place by those who have worked tirelessly for Jigsaw in the past. Our aim remains the same to help wherever we can and wherever possible to our overall purpose remains to assist people affected by adoption to establish and maintain relationships that mutually satisfy the needs of all concerned.

Trevor Jordan
President

Treasurer's Report

Jorgensen & Associates were once again appointed as Auditor and the audited reports were promptly and accurately completed for the year 2014-2015.

Continued funding in 2014-2015 was granted by the Queensland Government, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. This funding is paid half yearly totalling \$19,390.80 (including GST). In March 2015 Jigsaw received funding by the Australian Government, Department of Social Services, to establish the Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS). We received 1 year's funding with the amount of \$279,730 (including GST) in March 2015 which was back dated from July 2014. Jigsaw was granted permission to rollover unspent funds for FASS into the 2015-2016 financial year. These funds are to be expended by the end of June 2016.

During 2015 Jigsaw changed its accounting software from MYOB to Xero and experienced some challenges transferring data. This is a short term issue which will ultimately lead to having a more user friendly financial management system.

A special thanks to our auditors, Jorgensen and Associates for supporting the production of individual accounts for Jigsaw and FASS as well as combined account.

Collette Glazebrook
Treasurer

FASS Team Leader's Report

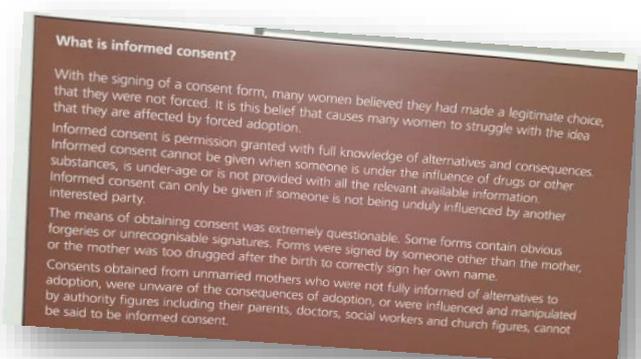
It has been an incredibly hectic and expansive year for Jigsaw. Our success in the Forced Adoption Support Service funding honours the decades of dedication from our volunteers and support workers. The gift of the shared experience that Jigsaw peer support brings to the post adoption service delivery model is unique and provides many rewards for both parties. As the FASS service enters its second 6 month period of operation, it is important to continue to maintain, foster and build upon our volunteer support base. At the FASS launch and during the recent Helping Skills course I saw firsthand the enthusiasm and connectedness that our volunteers feel towards Jigsaw.

No community based organisation can function (particularly during a time of rapid change) without a strong, stable and committed, management committee. I would like to thank Trevor, Collette, Heather, Jenny and Melissa for all their support and patience during the past year. When the FASS service invaded the lovely quiet and peaceful rooms of Jigsaw you were excited for the future of Jigsaw. Thank you for making me feel a part of your team even from last year, before the FASS program.

Jigsaw is blessed to have an amazing team of workers who bring with them a diverse range of knowledge and skills. They are the ones who create a responsive, warm and authentic sense of service for people who come to or call Jigsaw. The team understands how making that first call can be extremely anxious for some people and they value the connection. A huge thank you goes to Emma Keune, our able admin worker, who besides demonstrating incredible warmth to our clients, also quickly became an expert at building Ikea furniture. We wish Emma the best of luck with her social work studies – she

will make a brilliant social worker. Emma continues to work Thursdays and Fridays in the office. Again, Jigsaw has been so lucky to have Chris Mundy and Peta Jameson fill the roles of Information, Support and Referral FASS workers. Both bring a depth of skills and knowledge, but also a client focused and energetic work attitude. And huge thanks to Heather Hermann, a long-term Jigsaw volunteer who comes in every Wednesday to provide support to callers and organise us all. And a special thank you to Trevor for all of his support, lively ethical discussions and sense of humour....for simply nodding when I have put his hand up to speak somewhere or when I have come up with another idea.

One of our key challenges has been to work inclusively around the term "forced adoption". Following the Senate Inquiry and the AIFS study, we now know that many adoptions during throughout the last century feel within the parameters of "forced". Unfortunately, many mothers continue to believe that because they signed the consent form, that the adoption of their child was not forced. For adopted people, many are unaware at the time of commencing their search and reunion journey that their adoption was forced and only find out after having contact with their mothers. Hence, we often advocate that adopted people consider the history of forced adoption before initiating contact.



At Jigsaw we have framed a paragraph which was part of the National Archive's exhibition Without Consent: Australia's past adoption practices. We believe it aptly captures what is meant by 'forced'.

The term 'forced adoption' provides a collective meaning for thousands of women who internalised the loss of their children and who were made to carry the burden of shame and guilt alone for many years. It is our responsibility to support these mothers and their now adult children as they deconstruct what happened. It is also our responsibility to ensure that this never happens again by educating helping professions about the experience of forced adoption. This month Jigsaw gave a presentation on forced adoption to social work students at the University of Queensland. Next month we will be part of a panel with Harry Lovelock speaking about forced adoption at the AASW National Symposium in Sydney.

Jigsaw is a very special place. I have no doubt that the wonderful environment at Jigsaw is reflected in the quality of the services we provide to people who come to Jigsaw seeking our assistance.

Susan Kelly
Team Leader



Jigsaw Service Delivery Report

In 2014-2015, Jigsaw held:

- 5 Mother's Group meetings (1 meeting cancelled due to G20)
- 6 Adoptees Group meetings
- 6 Open Group meetings

Over 200 participants attended our support groups during 2014-2015.

In March, Jigsaw started using a client data management system called Infoxchange which allows us to capture a lot more data which ultimately allows us to report on a lot more detail. The following report concerns service delivery beginning March 2015 to the end June 2015.

Total Clients: 68
Male: 14
Female: 54

| Adoption Status | Persons |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Adopted Person | 41 |
| Birth Mother | 8 |
| Birth Father | 2 |
| Sibling | 7 |
| Adopted Person/Birth Mother | 1 |
| Adopted Person/ Birth Father | 0 |
| Adopted Person/Adoptive Parent | 0 |
| Partner | 0 |
| Friend/Relative | 3 |
| Adoptive Parent | 0 |
| Professional | 0 |

| Presenting Issue at Referral | Persons |
|--|---------|
| Assistance with accessing adoption records | 27 |
| Counselling Request | 1 |
| Assistance with Searching | 23 |
| Support Group Request | 10 |
| Intermediary Service Request | 5 |
| Assistance with BDM applications | 2 |
| Emotional Support | 17 |
| Information/Literature Request | 1 |
| Workshop Enquiry | 0 |
| Training Enquiry | 2 |
| Media Enquiry | 0 |
| Event Enquiry | 2 |
| Referral to other professional | 0 |

volunteering for Jigsaw. The 2 days were full of laughter, enthusiasm and sharing.



The follow statistics were gathered before the introduction of Infoxchange in March 2015 for the July 2014 to February 2015 period.

Enquiries:

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Adoptees | 36 |
| Birth Mothers | 24 |
| Birth Fathers | 2 |
| Siblings | 4 |
| Other relatives | 1 |
| Professionals | 16 |

Reason for contact:

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Search – Basics | 12 |
| Search – Next Steps | 5 |
| Prepare Contact | 3 |
| Post Contact | 1 |
| Late Discovery | |
| Emotional Support | 24 |
| Relationship Issues | 11 |
| Other Emotional | 1 |

Volunteers' Report

Volunteers continue to be the backbone of Jigsaw. Jigsaw recently held its 2 day Helping Skills course for people interested in

Volunteers receive ongoing support and debriefing either as group facilitators or in another form of direct client contact. Support is also given for volunteers with their own personal adoption journeys. Here are some comments from the participants at the 2015 Helping Skills course:

"I have received so much help and support from Jigsaw, I would like to be able to help others in return".

"The more people that learn how to help other the more we can share and help each other".

"As an adoptee I am interested in collaborating with other adoptive members and learning skills that help with understanding each other and our journey".

"It's a great way to connect with people, gain confidence in mastery and control".

"The older I get and the more involved I become with adoption, it's self-fulfilling to want to understand how to help others".

"To assist Jigsaw if needed as they have been invaluable to me".



There are always ongoing volunteer opportunities for people who have completed the Helping Skills course. We encourage anyone interested in volunteering with Jigsaw in the future to register their interest in the next Helping Skills course.

Mother Support Group Report

The Mothers support meeting entered its 18th year in August 2015 and continues to function along the lines of the previous years. It now has been 2 years since we started the bi-monthly meetings and it still is working very well for all mothers that attend. There is a regular core of mothers up to 7 sometimes 9. I hear them say over and over how great it is to have a safe place where they can talk freely and not be judged.

This year we had a deaf lady who wanted to attend our meeting, so I sent out an email to all mums asking if they were happy about this lady attending with her support sign person. The mums were wonderful and there only request was that the person that did the sign be female.

Also a big thankyou to Jenny C for taking the meeting when I have been away.

Kind Regards,
Heather Hermann

Adoptee Support Group Report

2015 saw the continuation of bimonthly Saturday afternoon support group meetings

for adoptees. Each of the six meetings was well-attended, averaging around seven clients.

We saw lots of new faces – some have become regulars, others dip in and out as is comfortable for them. Many clients have made significant progress in both their inner and outer journeys throughout 2015 and lots of new reunions have commenced.

Client feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many clients are sharing Jigsaw news and updates via Facebook.

Thanks go to Trevor and Melissa for their ongoing co-facilitation of the Adoptee Support Group – much appreciated.

Melissa Neilson

Open Support Group Report

A special thank you to Jigsaw of Trevor Jordan and Jenny Watkins who regularly shared the role of facilitation with me. I know from the experience of over a decade of facilitation that we never know in advance who will walk through the door. It is also true that not one meeting is ever the same and yet, every meeting offers a safe, friendly and confidential environment for learning more about yourself and the complexities of the adoption experience.

Every meeting continues to open with a welcome and individual introduction that includes a few words about “why I am here today” just to break the ice, especially for any first time attendees. Jigsaw then takes a short time to share information on a topical issue in adoption before opening the floor for those present to share their thoughts and questions.

It is a pleasure to report the Open Support Group has had another year of solid attendance of around 10 to 15 people at each meeting. The careful listening and respect

shown by participants to each other has the potential to encourage personal contribution from even the most reticent attendees. Feedback during and after each meeting continues to confirm individuals find comfort in the non-judgmental and friendship environment Jigsaw maintains throughout the meetings.

One thing that continues to be of great value to these meetings is the increasing number of mother's who come along. On many occasions we would be 50/50 adoptees and mothers!! The male/female ratio has become less of an issue over the past five years as we generally have males in each group, especially since Trevor has run the Male Only Workshop series.

Finally, I'd also like to thank all the participants of the Open Support Group who never fail to contribute so openly and honestly in sharing their private and personal stories ... and at times, can still surprise those of who have been volunteering at Jigsaw for a long time with questions that we've not heard asked before. Thank you participants, you are reason we exist.

See you at the next meeting 😊

Collette Glazebrook

