

BITS & PIECES

JIGSAW QLD INC | NEWSLETTER | 2019 AUTUMN EDITION

2019 Events

Mother's Day can be a complicated time for people affected by adoption. Losses are often on our mind and negotiating catch ups can be challenging. Don't forget that you can call us to discuss these issues or attend an upcoming group.

Jigsaw's support groups have experienced an increase in numbers since late 2015. Participation at the groups is free for members (suggested \$5/head donation for non-members).

Adopted Person Support Group

- (2019 Dates) 11 May, 13 July, 14 Sept & 9 Nov. Held on the ground floor of SANDS House, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm from 1.30 - 3.30pm.

Mother's Morning Tea - (2019

Dates: 10am to 12pm on the ground floor of SANDS House, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm on 15 May, 17 July, 18 Sept and 20 Nov. (An informal gathering for mothers who have experienced separation from their children by adoption).

Open Support Group - (2019

Dates) 13 April, 8 June, 10 Aug, 12 Oct, 14 Dec. Held on the ground floor of SANDS House, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm from 1.30 - 3.30pm.

Sunshine Coast Adoptee Group -

(2019 Dates) 27 April, 15 June, 17 Aug, 19 Oct & 21 Dec at Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre, 2 Fifth Ave, Cotton Tree from 1.20pm to 3.30pm.

Jigsaw Queensland Inc.

Understanding, Support & Information for all those with adoption in their lives.



Mother's Morning Tea brings a social approach to support.

Note to self: Tea Helps.

You may have noticed the day, time and format of the Mother's Group has changed in 2019. The support group, designed for mothers who have experienced separation from their children by adoption has traditionally taken place on Saturday afternoons. This year it has changed to an informal, weekday morning tea.

It is hoped the new format will better suit the lifestyle of its attendees, many of whom are busy with family or other social commitments on the weekends. It is also hoped the changes will encourage new attendees to come along. The group still meets in the meeting room at SANDS House, but embraces a more social atmosphere...and there is tea (and probably coffee and a biscuit or two).

If you would like to know more about the Mother's Morning Tea, please email Jigsaw Qld on support@jigsawqld.org.au or phone: (07) 3358 6666.

Sixth Anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoption Policies and Practices.

Commemoration with a speech by Guest Speaker, Evelyn Robinson OAM, mother, activist, author and post adoption professional.

On Thursday, 21 March we commemorated the 6th anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions at Riverside Reception Centre

New Farm. The event was organised by the Forced Adoption Support Service, in association with the Association for Adoptees, Origins Qld, Jigsaw Qld and ALAS Australia.

The event also included a moving exhibition titled, "My Adoption Experience: Words that have helped me". Contributions were made by people affected by forced adoption.

Attendees were invited to reflect on the apology during a one-minute silence, providing a space to acknowledge the ongoing impact of these past injustices and recognise those who have been agents of significant change for a better future for all. There was an opportunity to write down these reflections on paper and place

them on a tree as the ceremony closed. Highlights from these reflections can be found on page 8.

Thank you to Jo Sparrow who MC'd the event and the courageous people who were in attendance. It was a moving, supportive and enjoyable morning



Organising committee and distinguished guests, including guest speaker, Evelyn Robinson (far left).

shared with special people.

The historic apology was made by the Australian Government in the Great Hall at Parliament House, Canberra in 2013 in front of hundreds of affected men and women, with the hope it would ease some of the resulting pain and raise awareness of the long-term impacts of past forced adoption practices.

Jigsaw President, Trevor Jordan said the apology gave people who were affected an opportunity to speak about their experiences and to be heard.

"For many, rebuilding relationships and identities shattered by the forced adoption

experience is emotionally and practically difficult," he said.

"They may need help accessing records from government agencies who were formally responsible for past adoption. They may also need both peer support from someone who shares their experience and

support from professionals who are fully informed about forced adoption and its impacts.

"Jigsaw Queensland provides such peer and professional support to Queenslanders

affected through its Forced Adoption

Support Service on 1800 21 03 13."

Extract from Evelyn Robinson's Speech

I am often asked by those in other countries why it was that Australia was the first country in the world to issue a government apology for past adoptions. The truth is, of course, that there is no definitive answer to that question, as we have no way of identifying all of the events which coincided to produce the National Apology for Forced Adoptions in 2013.

I believe that Australia's journey towards that apology began in the 1980s, when grassroots movements to acknowledge the

grief and loss associated with separating children from their families by adoption began to gain momentum. This was not a national, organised, co-operative movement. There was a period of raising awareness of the long-term impact of adoption separation which occurred in different parts of the country at different times, which helped to create an environment in which the apologies of the twenty-first century could take place.



The first significant apology relating to family separation occurred in 2007, when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised to the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal people for the separation policies and practices of the past and their long-term outcomes. This was followed, in 2009, by the Apology to the Forgotten

Australians and Former Child Migrants. These apologies acknowledged the errors of the past, specified their long-term outcomes and stressed the value of putting in place supports and services to assist those affected.



The Jigsaw team (Heather, Andrea, Anne, Jane, Trevor and Rachel with Evelyn Robinson (2nd from right))

On the 19th of October, 2010, I was present when the state of Western Australia became the first jurisdiction in the world to apologise to family members separated by adoption. The Senate Community Affairs

Committee subsequently conducted an inquiry into the practice of forcible adoption in Australia in the twentieth century and, in February, 2012, published a report entitled Commonwealth Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices.

It was clear from the Senate

Inquiry Report that many of those who were adopted were, like the Stolen Generations, removed from their families 'by compulsion, duress or undue influence'. In response to the report, all of the other states and territories in

Australia, with the exception of the Northern Territory, issued apologies in 2012 for past adoption separations. For some, these apologies were the end of a journey - for others they were the beginning of one. Finally personal experiences were acknowledged as evidence of "... a lifelong legacy of pain and suffering".

All of these apologies pertained to family separation and its outcomes and they came about because those whose lives had been deeply affected by those separations, individually and in groups, had the courage to refuse to be intimidated any longer and to expose their experiences and their feelings to the politicians who had the power to make public apologies happen.

These apologies educated Australians about the impact of the policies and practices of the

past and paved the way for the National Apology for Forced Adoptions in 2013. As a result of that apology, many of those who had experienced adoption separation felt comforted and acknowledged. Each person's journey has been unique, but we all have in common an experience of separation and loss. Our experiences have been recorded and will stand as a historical record for generations to come.

Over time, those journeys - the journeys taken by the individuals who had experienced adoption separation and its outcomes and the journey taken by Australia itself - created an environment of understanding in which a National Apology for Forced Adoptions could take place.

Two important outcomes of the National Apology have been the provision of federal funding for support services to assist those whose lives have been affected by adoption separation and the fact that, since the apology, state government departments are more willing to consult with those who have experienced adoption separation when they are evaluating child protection policies.

The outcome of the journey taken by Australia and the journeys taken by those who experienced adoption separation in their lives has been an increase in healing, learning and peace. I would like to acknowledge the courage and determination of all those who contributed to educating others about the long-term outcomes of adoption separation and I congratulate Australia on leading

the world in acknowledging adoption separation issues.

Anniversary Exhibition Entry by Karen Dash

Two years ago, I started following an online blog called "Dear Adoption". It is a platform many adoptees use to share their truths, their pain, their joy, and their hopes. One particular article really resonated with me. It is called "Dear Adoption, I See You Now."

When I read this submission, I realised that I had been angry for a very long time. Angry with my adoptive parents, angry with my birth parents, and angry with myself. That anger was preventing me from moving forward. I decided to focus my anger on the "system" - the adoption system. Not on the people within the system, because the fact is that all members within my adoption triad believed the adoption system's lies. The system failed us all.

So, I wrote my own version of "Dear Adoption, I See You Now". I have found peace and healing in doing so. And there seems no better place to share it than at the 6th Anniversary of The Australian Government National Apology for Forced Adoptions.

Adoption, I See You Now

You have had a lifetime of wreaking havoc. You tore me from my roots, my heritage, my history. My Mother did not even get to see me. She did not get to hold me. I was taken, not given. Growing up in my adoptive family was hard. I don't want to blame my parents for that any longer. I blame you. You

should have educated my parents about the trauma of separation and loss. You damaged all parts of the triad, and then expected it to hold weight. You wreaked so much havoc that all that remained of the triad was a broken mess.

You tell me I am fundamentally flawed, I was not wanted, I am not worthy of love.

Adoption, you are complex. You have haunted me for a lifetime, but I see you now.

I see your tricks.

Your games will no longer work on me.

I'm letting go of anger.

I'm learning to heal.

I'm finding and nurturing forgiveness.

I see you now and you will not stop me from holding kindness and compassion in my heart. My heartache & grief will no longer consume me.

Your power over me is lost.

Emotional Support and Counselling for People Affected by Adoption

On our Jigsaw website we have a number of Information Sheets available to download. The most recent being about emotional support and counselling. Below is an excerpt. The full document can be downloaded here:

<https://>

www.jigsawqueensland.com/information-sheets

People affected by adoption sometimes seek emotional support or counselling and want to speak with a counsellor who has specific experience / training in adoption-related issues.

To get emotional support or counselling assistance your options include:

- **Short-term counselling / emotional support.** The Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) offer short-term counselling (up to 6 sessions) for issues related to adoption. Sessions can be offered face-to-face (in Brisbane) or via Skype or phone. This is a free service. If longer term therapeutic counselling is needed, FASS can assist you with locating a suitable counsellor. *Phone:* 1800 21 03 13 (Qld only) or (07) 3358 6666. *Email:* support@jigsawqld.org.au. www.jigsawqueensland.com/forced-adoption-support-service .

- **Longer term / therapeutic counselling.** Post Adoption Support Qld (PASQ) at the Benevolent Society offers specialist adoption-related counselling face-to-face (in Brisbane) or via Skype or telephone. Contributions are encouraged for some services but no one will be refused a service if unable to pay. *Phone:* (07) 3170 4600 or *Email:* pasq@benevolent.org.au .

- **Private Counselling:** There are some private counsellors available with specific experience in counselling people affected by adoption. The numbers are gradually building with the availability of training through the Australian Psychological Society (APS). FASS have a list of professionals who have completed the training.

**Read more by downloading the information sheet.

Reunited after forced adoption, Judy now spends Christmas with both her mums.

You might have read an ABC article by Tim Wong-See over the Christmas break about Judy Glover who facilitates the Sunshine Coast adoptee support group and is a member of the Association for Adoptees. A



excerpt is included below courtesy of the ABC.

For the full story and audio of her radio interview go to: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-13/adoptee-spends-christmas-with-her-two-mums/10613748?>

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For 21 years, Judy Glover did not know who her biological mother was, but this Christmas, she will be spending time with both of her mums.

On Christmas Eve Judy will be with her biological mother, Diane Maltby, and on Christmas Day she will be with Maureen Glover – the woman who adopted her at birth.

Judy was one of some 250,000 Australians who were forcibly put up for adoption between 1950 and 1975 under forced adoption policies.

Judy's biological mother, Mrs Maltby, recalled the horrific scenes at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital when Judy was born in December 1969.

"Basically you're left alone to birth and there was no support – no nursing staff caring for you and it was pretty traumatic, Mrs Maltby said.

"The unmarried mothers are put into a ward with other mums who are breastfeeding their babies and you have to watch all this.

Legislative change sparked emotional journey

When adoption laws changed in 1991, allowing adoptees to apply for their original birth certificates and name of their biological mother, Judy Glover began searching for her natural mother.

"Once the laws changed we started searching," she said.

"We applied for my original birth certificate and identifying information.

"That's 27 years ago and it's still very emotional – there's still stuff that comes up."

Despite spending years apart from her biological mother, Judy said the long process has been worthwhile.

"My mums know each other, they get along well, we've had mixed family events," said said.

Her adoptive mother, Maureen Glover, says that she supports both Judy and her natural mother, Mrs Maltby.

"It has turned out very well," Ms Glover said.

"She [Judy] was welcomed into Diane's family, and that doesn't always happen."

Mrs Maltby says that although she was robbed of the opportunity to raise her daughter, the idea that they would one day meet was never far from her mind.

"Over the years you remember her birthday and you always wonder how is she getting on, what her life is like," she said.

Diane said she had thought about finding Judy for many years before they finally met in 1991.

"I had thought about it because for a long time I couldn't do anything, there was no legal avenue to seek her out," Mrs Maltby said. "We were both very nervous I think [when they met].

Trevor Jordan says the success of a reunion can depend on the

stage of life people are at and people's previous life experiences.

"People who search as soon as they turn 18 and get access to information haven't had a lot of experience with the world but they've got the energy, commitment and the focus," he said.

"People in their 80's or 90's can have serious health issues ... middle age can be a great time, but people have their own families and life that they have to fit this new relationship into.

"It doesn't always work out and partly that can be because it depends on how people are at managing relationships.

"It depends on what has happened to them in their life.

Book Reviews

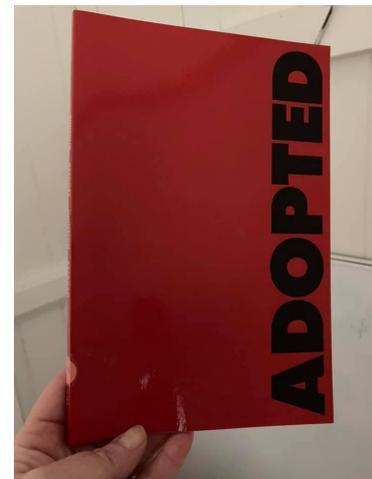
Did you know that Jigsaw Queensland stocks a library full of books about adoption from every point of view. The books cover personal stories, search, reunion, adoption trauma and many other aspects. These books are free to borrow for Jigsaw Members. Below are some new additions to the library.

Adopted by Diana Dunning, Sofie Gregory, Rebecca Johnston & Melinda Rackham

Four dynamic writers unearth the ongoing effects of their adoption through poetry and prose. This anthology presents rarely heard, authentic adoptee perspectives on trauma, loss and reclaiming

identity.) Published by IdentityRites.

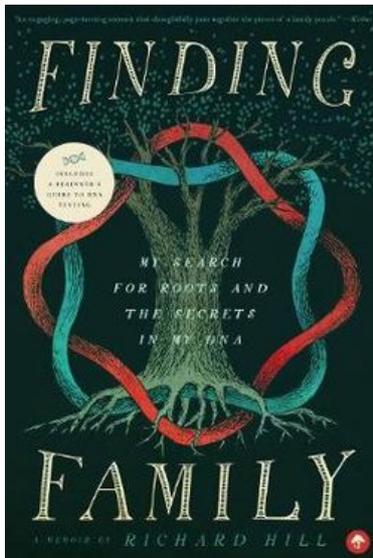
To get a copy, email sofiegregory@hotmail.com. The book is free to adopted people or organisations supporting them if they send a large self addressed envelope (at least 18 x 26 cm) and \$2.00 stamp attached. Otherwise the book costs \$10 including postage.



Finding Family: My search for roots and the secrets in my DNA - A memoir by Richard Hill

What family secrets would you discover in your DNA? Richard Hill did not plan to be a pioneer. He was just an adoptee trying to identify unknown birth parents. Yet his innovative application of DNA testing put him on the front page of The Wall Street Journal in May 2009. Richard shares the whole story of his search in this suspenseful memoir. His relentless quest to find his birth family takes readers on an exhilarating roller-coaster ride and concludes with a true twist that rivals anything Hollywood has to offer. Now, thousands of adoptees are

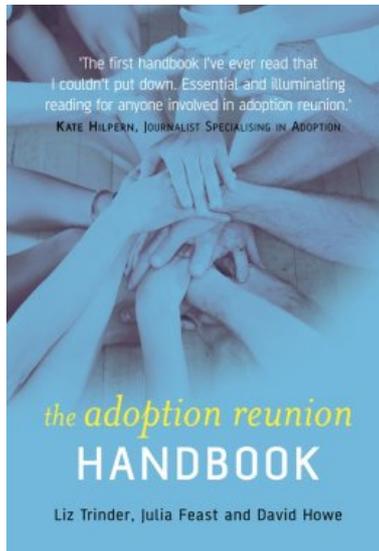
following Richard’s ground-breaking path, using DNA testing to bypass sealed birth records and reunite with their first families. Countless more adults are discovering new genetic relatives and extending and confirming their family trees. The emerging science of genetic genealogy provides a fascinating window into the past, yet the growing number of tests can be confusing. A Beginner’s guide to DNA Testing, included here as a supplement, is the concise overview you need to choose the right tests and solve your own family mystery.



The Adoption Reunion Handbook by Liz Trinder, Julia Feast and David Howe

Many adopted people today try to find information about their origins and search for birth family members. Based on a large-scale research study, the authors Liz Trinder, Julia Feast and David Howe have drawn on the real-life experience of adopted people who have searched for, and had a reunion with, birth relatives. The Adoption Reunion Handbook combines comprehensive and

practical step-by-step guidance and advice on: how to begin, what to expect emotionally, the legal framework, finding names and addresses, how to set up a reunion, making the reunion work long term, rejection and reunion breakdown, further help and advice. This ‘how to’ guide is essential for everyone involved, particularly those considering searching for information on their birth relatives. It will also be of use to birth parents, adoptive parents, post-adoption organisations, social workers, psychologists and counsellors.



Without Consent exhibition spreads the word on forced adoption.

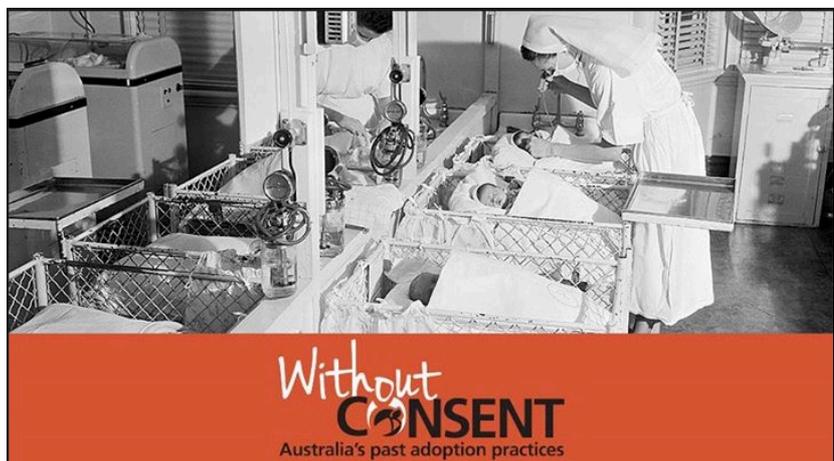
In the almost two months it was on display at the Hervey Bay Regional Gallery, the *Without Consent* Exhibition, produced by National Archives of Australia attracted close to 3000 visitors.

Since opening four years ago, the exhibition has attracted a total of 190, 270 visitors in 12 venues across Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland.

Jigsaw President, Trevor Jordan said the figures were heartening.

“Every visitor to the exhibition has either been affected by or knows someone who has been affected by forced adoption, or has been educated about forced adoption issues through this experience,” Dr Jordan said.

“This ultimately leads to better community understanding and opportunities for people to think about their experiences and in time heal.”

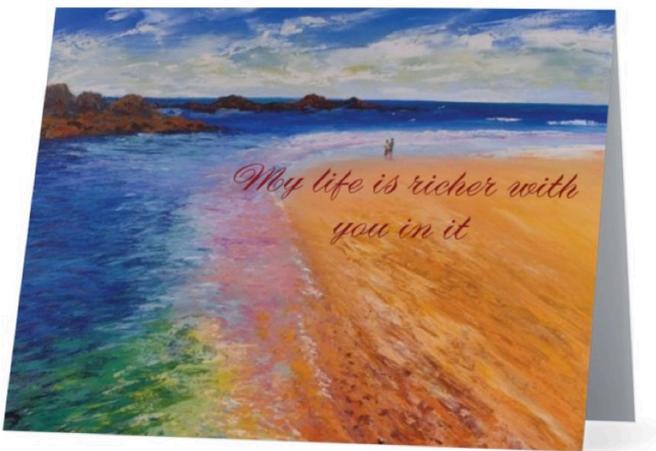


Adoption Mother's Day Cards - *My life is richer with you in it...*

Mother's Day can be a challenging time for people affected by adoption. Choosing an appropriate card can be fraught with conflicting emotions.

Jigsaw Qld has been working on an adoption-appropriate Mother's Day card to provide an alternative to the norm.

This card has been developed by people affected by adoption. It is available for purchase on the Jigsaw Qld website shop tab for \$5, including postage.



Attendees place their reflections on the tree at the Federal Anniversary Event.

Reflection Tree Highlights Federal Apology - 21 March, 2019

"Finally we're righting the wrongs"

"We have come a long way but we still have a long way to come. I will always fight while I have breath in my body"

"The anniversary is so important for all victims of forced adoption and for the public to understand the lifelong trauma. Thank you for remembering"

"Thank you for truth and encouragement and remembrance within a safe environment with friends. A space to natter and a space to listen and know the depth of a few words. Thank you, thank you".

"Our children are irreplaceable".

"A wonderful day of reflecting on a great achievement recognising the pain of adoption. It's been a long journey helped by Jigsaw and the wonderful fellow travellers".

"A surprisingly moving ceremony for me, almost 30 years after reunion with my daughter. Thank you".

"Thank you. Today provided the usual validation but more; the hope that change for better is ever a potential".

"I'm so grateful my daughter is in my life and her children are my grandchildren. It has been a long and difficult journey and many empty years but we are now a family. But the original loss remains a deep cut in my heart. My daughter should have had her mother and I should have mothered her".

"So much pain for so many years that should not have happened. Thank you for the apology that has helped in some small way".

"I am overjoyed to know that Australia is leading the way in reform"

Would you like to see integrated birth certificates in Queensland?

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THIS AND MORE!

REVIEW OF THE BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 2003 (QLD)

The public is being consulted on the review through the release of three discussion papers. Consultation on the first discussion paper has already been undertaken in 2018. The remaining two discussion papers have now been released (the most relevant to our members being Discussion Paper 3). These papers examine key aspects of the legislation, including the functions and powers of the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the use and disclosure of information and the registration of life events.

READ MORE HERE: <https://publications.qld.gov.au/.../7af01605-aced-41e3-9374-7...>

PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON DISCUSSION PAPER 3 here: <https://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/.../.../survey/4951/view.html>