

# Bits & Pieces



Jigsaw Qld: (07) 3358 6666 or 1800 21 03 13 (Qld only) - [www.jigsawqueensland.com](http://www.jigsawqueensland.com)

## Adoption Act 2009 Review

*By Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow - President*

In May, the Queensland Government announced a Commission of Inquiry into the Child Safety System, led by Paul Anastassiou KC.

Its terms of reference will consider the residential care system, the broader child safety system, and—of particular importance to our community—the long overdue review of the *Adoption Act 2009*.

This review comes at a critical time. Before his election, Premier David Crisafulli stated that he would “bring back adoption” as a solution to youth crime. Jigsaw Queensland and other stakeholders are therefore watching this Inquiry with great interest.

Our community has been waiting many years for a thorough review of adoption legislation. There remains much unfinished business since the 2012 Senate Report, and Jigsaw Queensland will be making a submission addressing these outstanding issues and the dangerous suggestion that adoption could be used as an answer to youth crime.

We will continue to stress to government and the Inquiry: listen to those who live with the lifelong consequences of adoption every single day. Adoption is not a simple solution to complex child safety and youth justice challenges.

## Have Your Say

We encourage our community to make individual submissions to the Inquiry. Your voice matters. There is time: the Inquiry formally commenced on 1 July 2025 and will run for approximately 17 months, with its final report due on 30 November 2026. Along the way, the Commission may release interim reports, discussion papers, and updates.

We will be strongly advocating for:

- An independent facilitator to meet with individuals and groups, listen to their experiences, and collate feedback into a submission. This approach was used during the last review of the *Adoption Act 2009* and was invaluable for people who found it difficult to engage through traditional written submissions.
- Alternative submission formats beyond written documents. For many in our community, capturing experiences in writing is traumatising or inaccessible. Allowing audio, video, or facilitated oral submissions would ensure all voices can be heard and respected.



## Why It Matters

At Jigsaw Queensland, we've supported tens of thousands of people impacted by adoption —adopted people, mothers and fathers, adoptive parents, and extended families. We know adoption has profound lifelong impacts on identity, relationships, mental health, trust, belonging, and sense of self.


We also acknowledge that this period of public debate may be distressing, even traumatising, for many. Please remember you are not alone—Jigsaw is here to walk alongside you.

## A Message to Leaders

To our decision-makers: please do not let history repeat itself. This Inquiry & Review are opportunities to show courage, compassion, and leadership by centring the voices of those who have lived this reality—not just in the past, but still today.

Jigsaw Queensland will stay in close contact with the Department throughout the Inquiry and keep our community updated via [Facebook](#), our [website](#), [YouTube](#), this newsletter, and the [Adopt Perspective podcast](#).

Watch our interviews with [Prof. Nahum Mushin](#) and [Paul Sunderland](#) for more information about alternatives to adoption and the lifelong and intergenerational impacts of adoption.

 More information: Queensland Child Safety Inquiry

## Jigsaw in Toowoomba

Our peer support groups are the solid foundation upon which Jigsaw Queensland was created 49 years ago and they continue to be a powerful way for people impacted by adoption to learn, grow and heal.

We offer Adoptee Support Groups, Mixed Support Groups and a Mothers Morning Tea in New Farm at our head office and the local library. But we're keen to branch out and offer peer support in person in more locations.

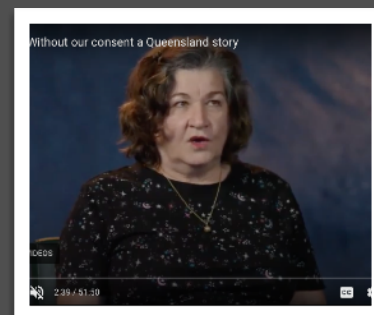
Our first step towards that goal is Adoptee Support Groups in Toowoomba on Saturday 6 September and Saturday 15 November. Each group will meet from 1.30pm



## WITHOUT OUR CONSENT: A QUEENSLAND STORY

Have you watched the Without Our Consent: A Queensland Story oral history yet? The interviews feature a mother who was forced to give her child up for adoption (Anne), an adoptee (Jo), and a father who was coerced into placing his son for adoption (Alan). It also includes interviews with representatives of post adoption organisations and Queensland politicians.

This video is a must watch for anyone affected by adoptions between 1950 and through the 1980s. You can watch it [here](#).



to 3.30pm on Level 3 of Toowoomba City Library, located at 55 Herries Street, Toowoomba (corner of Victoria and Herries Street).

If you're an adopted person and you live in the Darling Downs we'd love you to join us at these support groups. Or if you know an adopted person who lives in the local area please let them know about these new support groups.

It's best to arrive early so that we can all start on time and create a safe, brave space to talk. Hopefully we see you there this Saturday and/or on Saturday 15 November.



## Small Grant Success

*By Helen Angela Taylor - CEO*

Ten years ago Jigsaw Queensland was chosen as the Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS) provider for the state of Queensland. We are the only lived-experience organisation delivering FASS in Australia, with other States and Territories supported by Relationships Australia.

FASS funding is provided by the Department of Social Services. We need to meet, and report on, our obligations every year. One such obligation is to provide Small Grant Funding to individuals and organisations in Queensland so they can build sector capacity and enhance group healing for people impacted by forced adoption.

What does 'build sector capacity' mean? We interpret this in the broadest way possible to maximise funding opportunities for relevant people and groups. Essentially, building sector capacity means supporting people impacted by adoption to design and deliver activities, services or programs that empower members of the forced adoption community. It is based on the premise that people with lived experience are best placed to identify and create relevant, trauma-informed programs for their community.

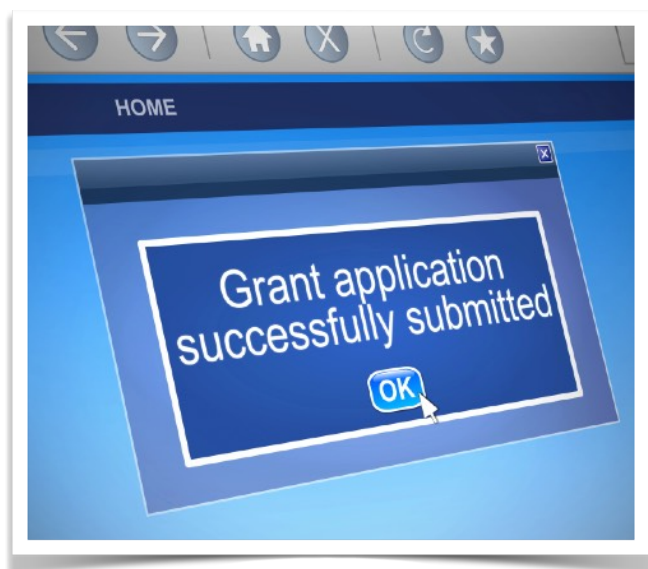
## FORCED ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE (FASS) - 1800 21 03 13

Forced Adoption Support Services are funded by the Australian Government in every state and territory. Jigsaw Queensland is proud to deliver these free services for people in Queensland impacted by past adoption practices. Our professional, dedicated team offer:

- Telephone, face-to-face (by appt) and online support with adoption related issues.
- Information on accessing your adoption records and assistance with searching for and making contact with your relatives, including an intermediary service.
- Support in managing post contact with relationships.
- Referral to support groups and professionals.
- Small grants program to build community capacity.



Forced Adoption  
Support Services



Our FASS Team Leader Simone Gott dedicated considerable time and energy in the first half of this year to deliver one of our most successful Small Grant rounds. As a result we approved nine high-quality applications from individuals and groups, the majority of which will be designed and delivered by people with lived experience of forced adoption.

We are very proud of this outcome and extremely grateful to the people who put up their hand, shared their ideas and submitted an application. Definitely a team effort! One such opportunity is a series of group healing sessions being held across four weekends in Samford, where participants explore EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) Tapping and Hypnotherapy to understand the mind-body connection, feel their emotions and heal their trauma.

Another opportunity is a weekend workshop on the Sunshine Coast in November 2025 called 'Healing the Hidden Wounds' where participants will learn how to apply the systemic family constellations therapeutic method to heal adoption trauma and achieve somatic sovereignty.

And the third lived-experience opportunity will be delivered in the first half of 2026 on Magnetic Island, off the coast of Townsville, where participants will explore self

care and self soothing strategies using creative processes and tools.

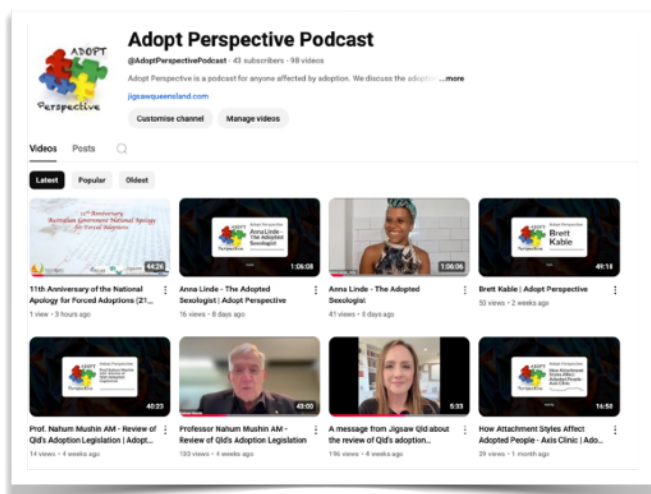
If you're interested in attending any of these innovative programs, call us on 1800 21 03 13 or send us an email to [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au).

If you've got an idea for Small Grants funding, make a note in your calendar that applications for the next round close on 31 May 2026.



## Jigsaw now on YouTube

We're excited to share that Jigsaw Queensland now has a YouTube channel! We've embraced long and short form video as a way of highlighting the lifelong impact of adoption and keeping you up-to-date on the





latest news. You can also now listen and watch [Adopt Perspective podcast](#) about the lived experience of adoption, on our YouTube channel.

You'll see more of our podcast episodes moving forward being edited for video viewing and you can follow along with full transcripts and easily share with friends and support networks.

Of course you'll still be able to find us on your favourite podcast platform and many of them now enable transcripts, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music and Castbox.

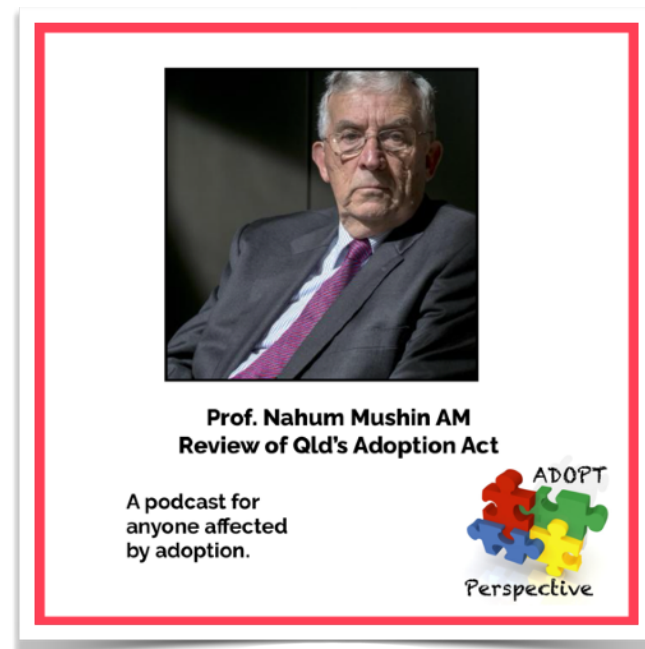
## Must Watch Interviews

We're proud to share with you two very special episodes of Adopt Perspective podcast featuring internationally renowned addiction expert and psychotherapist, [Paul Sunderland](#) and [Professor Nahum Mushin AM](#) - former Family Court Judge and Chair of the Forced Adoption Apology Reference Group for timely and vital conversations.



[Paul Sunderland](#) is globally recognised for his groundbreaking work at the intersection of adoption, trauma, and addiction, and his compelling presentations have gone viral in

adoption communities worldwide. In this deep and insightful conversation, Paul explores the lifelong psychological and emotional impacts of adoption, including how early separation and identity trauma can manifest in adulthood.



In the thought-provoking episode with [Professor Nahum Mushin](#) he discusses the Commission of Inquiry into the Child Safety System and Premier David Crisafulli's intention to 'bring back adoption' as a solution to youth crime with our President Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow. Together they explore:

- Why adoption is not a simple or trauma-free solution
- How it impacts identity, belonging, and mental health
- Safer, more ethical alternatives to adoption
- The importance of listening to lived experience
- And what true, compassionate permanency might look like

## Mothers Retreat

Congratulations to Joyce, Viv and Di for planning and delivering a highly successful Mothers Retreat at Bribie Island Surf Club from Friday 8 August to Monday 11 August.



Twenty-four mothers impacted by forced adoption attended the retreat, while our CEO Helen Angela Taylor and FASS Team Leader Simone Gott attended on Saturday and Sunday to offer support and assistance.

We knew from planning meetings beforehand that Joyce, Viv and Di had done comprehensive preparation to ensure a retreat that encompassed care, connection and healing. But we were blown away by the level of detail and the creative way in which they designed the retreat program and sourced quality facilitators in such a cost effective way.

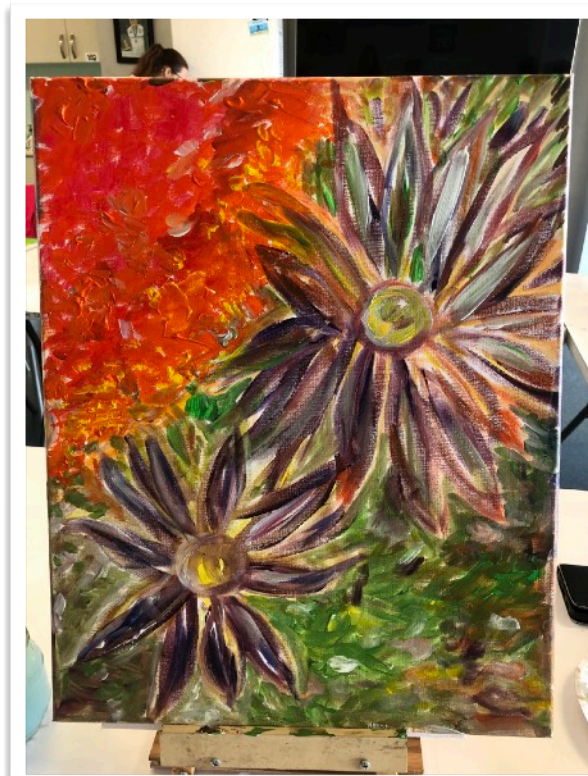
Equally important was the choice for participants to opt in or opt out of sessions because we don't all enjoy the same activities and sometimes we need a break from the group to see how we're feeling and recharge our batteries.

The Chair Yoga session showed participants how to stretch and soothe their body with basic yoga moves. The panel

discussion on reunion was a chance to hear and explore different mothers' experiences of finding their adult child and building a relationship.

A workshop on sharing your voice as a mother impacted by forced adoption offered practical tips on how to do this and an opportunity for participants to share memories that brought up powerful feelings in a supportive space.

The Ageless Grace session activated the five primary functions of the brain, supporting participants to integrate skills needed for optimal body and brain function.



## DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Do you have a story to tell? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

Adopt Perspective Podcast explores the adoption experience from the perspectives of mothers, fathers and adopted people. We share personal stories, research and information and also interview creators in this space. You can submit a prospective guest form here: [www.jigsawqueensland.com/adopt-perspective](http://www.jigsawqueensland.com/adopt-perspective).

Adopt Perspective is hosted and produced by Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow, President of Jigsaw Queensland.





The Laughter Yoga session created fun and frivolity, and a strong sense of connection through joy. A workshop on Self Soothing Strategies explored practical ways to take beautiful care of the self in daily life.

A guided tour of the Butterfly House enabled everyone to connect with nature and marvel at the fragile beauty and magical metamorphosis of these tiny creatures.

**'You have been just so nice about it.  
God Bless you.  
All I have wanted to know  
is that he is okay and  
that his adoptive parents  
looked after him  
and we have that now.'**

Father, July 2025

The Bubbles and Brushes Art activity brought out the budding artist in participants, with many beautiful pieces created. And it was all tied up with a fun group dinner on Sunday evening to reflect on the retreat and connect with each other.

Even better than all this, participants reconnected with long-standing friends and made new friendships, based on mutual respect, understanding and compassion. Beautiful work, Joyce, Viv and Di.

## Peer Support Workers

We're thrilled to announce the names of our 'new' Peer Support team.

Mind you, it's a bit misleading to say they're all new - five of them have been delivering peer support for many years to individuals and groups - but they're being joined by an additional six people with lived experience of adoption:

*Jo - adoptee*

*Trevor - adoptee*

*Heather - mother*

*Lois - adoptee*

*Melissa - adoptee*

*Phil - father*

*Kathryn - mother*

*Jan - adoptee*

*Sharlene - adoptee*

*Chrissa - adoptee*

*Philippa - adoptee*

We will be supporting them with professional development, team building and self care activities so they can give their best to other people impacted by adoption.

You may have heard a well-known quote from Mary Ellen Copland and Shery Mead, who describe peer support as being based on mutual understanding from shared experiences, with the aim of building a community focused on recovery and growth.





***“When one person rises, they reach back and lift another. That's peer support.”***

With a larger team of peer support workers we can do more for our adoption community.

- More support groups in more locations.
- More activities that bring people impacted by adoption together.
- More ways to connect and support each other at every stage of the adoption journey.

It's a very exciting time for Jigsaw Queensland.

**‘I am very grateful that Jigsaw exists!’**

Adoptee, July 2025

## Support Groups

Our peer support groups are a powerful way for people impacted by adoption to learn, grow and heal. Our experienced and compassionate facilitators have lived experience of adoption.

Below are our scheduled meeting dates for 2025. Participation at the groups is free.

**Mothers' Morning Tea** - For mothers who have experienced separation from their children by adoption. A regular morning tea from 10am to 12 noon - 17 Sept & 19 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

**Adoptee Support Group** - For adopted people. Brisbane: (1.30pm - 3.30pm) 13 Sept & 8 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

Toowoomba: (1.30 - 3.30pm) 6 Sept & 15 Nov. Venue: Toowoomba City Library - Level 3 Meeting Rooms, 155 Herries St, Toowoomba.

**Mixed Group** - For adopted people & their siblings & mothers and fathers separated from their children by adoption. Attendees are welcome to bring along a friend or family member for support. (1.30pm to 3.30pm) - 4 Oct & 6 Dec. NOTE: Mixed Group meetings are held at New Farm Library Meeting Room, 135 Sydney St, New Farm. Venue & facilities are wheelchair accessible. On-site parking is limited, so allow time to find a nearby street park.

Please arrive before the scheduled time, as doors are locked once the group begins to ensure the safety and privacy of participants.

To keep up with the latest information or changes,