

Jigsaw Queensland



Annual Report 2024 – 2025

Established in 1976 by dedicated volunteers

Longest running post adoption support agency in Australia

Trauma-informed support led by people with lived experience

Vision

Empowering people to understand, and heal from, the impact of adoption.

Mission

Support – Connect – Inform - Advocate

Values

Safety – Choice – Integrity - Compassion

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Message from the President

The 2024–2025 financial year has been one of renewal, growth and extraordinary achievement for Jigsaw Queensland. I could not be prouder of what our team has accomplished.

This year we welcomed our new Chief Executive Officer, Helen Angela Taylor, whose energy, professionalism and vision have guided Jigsaw into an exciting new era. Under Helen's leadership - and with the capable support of Team Leader, Simone Gott, and our expanding team - we have rebuilt the Forced Adoption Support Service, strengthened our peer support program, launched new small grants and training initiatives, and expanded our reach through social media and podcasting.

As President, it has been a privilege to witness the way our team continues to deliver trauma-informed, lived-experience-led support with such compassion and integrity. The warmth and professionalism of our staff and volunteers embody our mission to support, connect, inform and advocate for everyone impacted by adoption.

I also want to acknowledge our community - the many people who engage with us through support groups, events, and social media. Your trust, courage and generosity of spirit continue to inspire everything we do.

To our Management Committee, thank you for your guidance and commitment to strong governance. Together we are ensuring Jigsaw Queensland remains a safe, sustainable and forward-thinking organisation, ready to meet the evolving needs of our community for many years to come.



Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow
President

Message from the CEO

The financial year 2024-2025 saw significant change and growth for Jigsaw Queensland. Our long-term President, Dr Trevor Jordan, who also served as CEO from 2021-2024, retired after many years of dedicated service to people impacted by adoption.

I joined as the new CEO, and we rebuilt the FASS team from scratch with a new Team Leader and two Information and Support Workers. There was considerable risk for Jigsaw Queensland from so much change in a short period of time. However, as a team of passionate professionals with shared values, we have set the organisation on an exciting path of innovation.

Our strategic and business planning processes clearly show the roadmap for operations and expectations. We rejuvenated the office and meeting areas to create a warm, welcoming space for visitors and team members. We embarked on an ambitious program of proactive engagement with stakeholders in government and the community sector. This included reaching out to State and Federal Members of Parliament on a regular

basis to raise awareness about the lifelong impact of adoption and communicate our expectations of them as community leaders who must drive positive change in post adoption support.

As CEO I have received a lot of feedback over the past 12 months. Perhaps the most fulfilling feedback came from an interstate peer who told me they 'love our new online presence, sense of positive energy and renewal'.

I appreciate every single person who has contributed to this success.



Helen Angela Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

Our People

Management Committee

Our Management Committee is comprised of a President, Treasurer, Secretary and three Members, all with lived experience of adoption.

In December 2024 Dr Trevor Jordan resigned as a Member of the Management Committee. In March 2025 Robert White resigned from the role of Treasurer after several years of generous service to Jigsaw Queensland. In May 2025 Kathryn Rendell joined the Management Committee as a Member.

Peer Support Workers

Our team of Peer Support Workers grew from five to ten during 2024-2025 as we transitioned from voluntary to professional work.



FASS Team

Our entire FASS (Forced Adoption Support Service) team has changed hands during 2024-2025. Originally appointed as an Information and Support Worker in March 2024, Simone Gott was successful in her application for the Team Leader position only a few months later.

In June 2024 Donna Byrne joined the team as an Information and Support Worker, bringing her experience in nursing and health promotion.

In August 2024 Sarah Oakleigh joined as our second Information and Support Worker, with her knowledge of frontline community services and experience as a social worker.

Together they have been a strong, positive and dedicated team.



Our Programs

Peer Support Program

Peer support is the foundation upon which Jigsaw Queensland was created because, back in the 1970s, during the forced adoption era, there was no support for people impacted by adoption.

Jigsaw Queensland was established by a group of passionate volunteers who were determined to offer information and support, and advocate for legislative reform.

In recent years we have relied on five volunteer peer support workers to facilitate support groups and attend community events.

However, with broader community recognition of the need for people with lived experience to design and deliver services, in 2024-2025 we transitioned from a volunteer to a professional peer support team.

In 2025 we appointed an additional five Peer Support Workers, so we now have a team of ten. We developed a Peer Support Manual and each Peer Support Worker completed Lifeline's Accidental Counsellor training.

This larger team will enable us to expand peer support activities next financial year so that we can reach a wider audience across Queensland and ensure long-term sustainability of our peer support into the future.

Adoptee Support Group

This year we hosted five Adoptee Support Groups at Jigsaw HQ in New Farm. One meeting had to be cancelled due to flood risk posed by Cyclone Alfred in March 2025.

Mixed Support Group

This year we hosted six Mixed Support Groups and trialled a new venue for these groups – New Farm Library Meeting Room – which is a fully accessible venue.

Mothers Morning Tea

This year we hosted six Mothers Morning Tea meetings at Jigsaw HQ which were well attended.



Our Programs

Forced Adoption Support Service

This reporting period marks ten years since Jigsaw Queensland was chosen as the preferred provider of Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS) in Queensland.

Our brand new FASS team – Team Leader Simone Gott, and Information and Support Workers, Donna Byrne and Sarah Oakleigh – applied their diverse depth of experience to review policies and processes and introduce new approaches.

Early priorities were ensuring robust induction and training for team members; and updating our privacy policy, consent forms, intake form, and small grant application form.

We introduced monthly professional external supervision to support the wellbeing of staff and offered professional development opportunities to expand knowledge and build confidence.

During 2024-2025 the FASS team completed the following training:

- Working with Complex Trauma
- Prolonged Grief
- Advanced Grief Counselling

- Ageing, Grief and Bereavement
- Compassion Focussed Therapy
- First Aid and CPR Training.



The FASS team observed some recurring themes in phone enquiries: redress and compensation; siblings seeking siblings; people wanting names of counsellors with an understanding of adoption impact; people starting the search process in their fifties; lengthy wait times for adoption records in other states; and people affected by family separation due to child protection issues seeking support.

Case Management

Our FASS team uses Infoxchange for case management, which is the approved software for the Department of Social Services. As a funded service we have an obligation to provide data about our service delivery.

During 2024-2025 Infoxchange data shows that we managed the following number of individual cases each month:

July 2024	49
August 2024	50
September 2024	51
October 2024	77
November 2024	61
December 2024	44
January 2025	51
February 2025	58
March 2025	40
April 2025	50
May 2025	60
June 2025	59

Infoxchange also records the 'occasions of support' we provide. This includes phone calls, emails, in person appointments and outreach.

During 2024-2025 we provided the following number of 'occasions of support' to clients:

July 2024	169
August 2024	137
September 2024	155
October 2024	227
November 2024	173
December 2024	127
January 2025	160
February 2025	206
March 2025	123
April 2025	141
May 2025	221
June 2025	160

That is a total of 1,999 occasions of support, an average of 7.6 per business day.



In the past, we have not opened for business in the period between Christmas and New Year. However, we know that the festive season can be a challenging time for people impacted by adoption. So, in December 2024 we opened our office on 27, 30 and 31 December to see if there was a demand from clients. We received a number of enquiries and requests for emotional support which confirms that Christmas time can bring up a range of challenging emotions for our community.

Our Programs

Small Grants

In June 2025 we approved nine high-quality small grant applications, with each creating the opportunity to build community capacity and/or facilitate group healing.

Five of the nine initiatives will be designed and delivered by people with lived experience of the impact of forced adoption.

Accidental Counsellor training

Peer support and advocacy groups in Queensland have been providing information, support and referral for people impacted by forced adoption for many years. Most of them took on this role due to their own lived experience and desire to drive positive change.

However, they have varying levels of skills and knowledge, so this grant is an opportunity for them to attend Lifeline's Accidental Counsellor course which is designed to help participants respond to people in distress or experiencing a crisis. Funding for this training will build capacity within our adoption community to provide effective support for people via phone or in person across the state.

Mothers Retreat

Three mothers who lost a child to adoption proposed a diverse, engaging program for a weekend Mothers Retreat to be held at Bribie Island. Over two full days and three nights, participants will experience a chair yoga session, a panel discussion on reunion, a workshop on sharing your voice, an Ageless Grace session, a laughter yoga session, a workshop on self-soothing strategies, a trip to the Butterfly House, a Bubbles and Brushes art activity, and a group dinner.

The proposal is highly cost effective, drawing on existing community relationships and generous volunteers. The Mothers Retreat will build community capacity for mothers to facilitate their own activities and offer tangible group healing strategies that participants can apply in their daily lives.



Vicarious Trauma training

Blue Knot Foundation is the National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma. They offer training in Managing Wellbeing and Recognising Trauma. This training program explores the nature, dynamics and risks of vicarious trauma and supports participants to stay healthy and safe in their peer work. This training will build capacity within our adoption community to manage their health and wellbeing whilst continuing their important work.



Healing the Hidden Wounds

This two-day Systemic Family Constellations Workshop is designed to provide a therapeutic space where participants can explore and heal intergenerational trauma, restore broken family connections and reclaim a sense of belonging and identity.

Systemic Family Constellations is a powerful approach that reveals and resolves deeply rooted family dynamics, offering profound insights into inherited trauma and systemic patterns that continue to shape our lives today. The workshop builds capacity in the adoption community and delivers group healing for people impacted by forced adoption.

Affirmation Cards

A male adoptee who is a highly skilled graphic designer expressed an interest in creating and printing a series of positive affirmation cards for adopted people. Although affirmation cards are easily available, we've not found any that are specifically made for the emotional support needs of adopted people. This initiative is grounded in trauma-informed design principles and lived experience, and will produce a tangible, beautifully crafted tool for identity work, emotional validation, and community healing.

This creative project will build capacity in the adoption community and offer individual healing for adoptees. Once produced, the affirmation cards could also be used by community members and professionals in group healing activities.

Self-Care and Soothing Workshop

A female adoptee who resides on Magnetic Island, east of Townsville, will deliver a one-day workshop in three activities: 1) meditation and chair yoga to calm the nervous system, stretch and breathe to release stress; 2) art activities using clay, charcoal and paint as therapeutic options for engaging and soothing the nervous system; and 3) African drumming to engage vibrancy and restore playfulness – releasing

inner tension and creating group cohesion. This dynamic, creative workshop builds community capacity in the adoption community and offers three different group healing activities for people living in north Queensland.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training

MHFA equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to recognise, understand, and respond to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis, until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves. It's a proactive approach that aims to reduce stigma, increase support, and improve access to timely mental health care. This training will build community capacity to respond to people in crisis, including those at risk of self-harm.



EFT Tapping and Hypnotherapy Workshop series

Over four months, an adopted person, who is a trauma-informed therapist, with 28 years of experience supporting individuals through trauma recovery, identity exploration, and emotional healing, will guide

participants in a series of workshops using EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) tapping and hypnotherapy, which are powerful tools to access and release deep emotional patterns stored in the body and subconscious mind. This innovative therapy program builds capacity in the adoption community to offer targeted services and offers group healing techniques that participants can apply in their daily lives.

How Attachment Styles affect adopted people

Separation at birth results in complex trauma that affects adopted people for the rest of their lives, often resulting in insecure attachment.

Axis Clinic developed a bespoke program for adoptees to understand how their attachment style affects their relationships with self and others. The 10-week program will be delivered online, to maximise statewide participation. It builds capacity in the professional community to understand the impact of adoption and offers group healing for adopted people.



Our Programs

Adopt Perspective Podcast

In 2024-2025 we celebrated five years and 100 episodes of *Adopt Perspective* Podcast.

What started out as a new way to share people's stories has evolved into a powerful source of information and support for 46,000 listeners across 45 countries.

Our core audience demographic is mature, with 48% of listeners aged 45-59 and 30% aged over 60. This reflects people affected by historical forced adoption policies, which means our podcast is reaching its intended audience.

The majority of listeners (75%) are female, and the majority (75%) reside in Australia. The next most popular audience country is the USA (12.5%).



Adopt Perspective can be heard on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Deezer, Spotify, Castbox, Pocket Casts, Amazon Music and Overcast.

This year we launched *Adopt Perspective* on You Tube, with videos of each interview now available, which will attract a new audience and enhance the user experience.

This year we produced 20 episodes covering personal stories on adoption; follow up stories from people interviewed in prior years; training for people who work with people impacted by forced adoption; intergenerational impact of adoption; intercountry adoptee mental health; donor conception and DNA.

A highlight for this year was an interview with Paul Sunderland, an expert in process addiction treatment, who has a special interest in the early psychological wounds of adoption.



E12 - Video of Paul Sunderland Interview

Our Programs

SS JIGSAW

In 2012 the Australian Institute of Family Studies published a report on *Past Adoption Experiences* which highlighted the devastating psychological and emotional impact of adoption:

- many mothers experienced severe mental health conditions like PTSD and mood disorders.
- 70% of adopted people reported that adoption negatively affected their health, behaviour, or well-being.
- fathers often showed symptoms of PTSD and poor mental health.
- all participants reported issues with personal identity, anxiety, depression, and attachment in relationships.

The psychological and emotional impact of adoption directly affects our ability to connect with others, which can lead to social isolation and loneliness.

At Jigsaw Queensland we see strong connections being made in our peer support groups and wanted to create

an extension of that so people impacted by adoption could come together in a social context. That is how SS JIGSAW – *Simply Social* JIGSAW - was born.



We hosted five SS JIGSAW events in 2025:

- a dancing in the dark experience with No Lights No Lycra
- a bushwalk in Toohey's Forest
- a morning walk along the Brisbane River followed by breakfast at Cordeaux Social Club
- a laugh-a-minute at Brisbane Comedy Festival
- lunch at Carina Leagues Club.

Twenty-nine (29) people impacted by adoption attended these SS JIGSAW events. We received fantastic feedback on this new program, and look forward to hosting more events in 2025-2026.

Victoria – Adoptee

I have been lucky enough to attend one of the SS Jigsaw events and share a lovely meal with a table full of fellow adoptees. As with most occasions where adoptees are together, the conversation naturally turns to adoption, but the relaxed atmosphere meant that other subjects were discussed also. Sharing of stories between adopted people is so important as it gives us the opportunity to talk with a shorthand that non-adoptees will never have. The level of comfort with people who understand can never be underestimated and the peer support offered through these relationships is so important. It is through Jigsaw that we are able to form these communities.



Elizabeth - Adoptee

These social gatherings have helped ease the deep sense of isolation I had been feeling and, most importantly, restored a sense of belonging that had been missing from my life for many years. Engaging with other adoptees who share similar experiences has been deeply validating. The empathetic, non-judgemental environment fosters trust and allows for open, honest, and often healing conversations.

The SS JIGSAW gatherings have supported my ongoing journey of healing and self-discovery, and they have given me a meaningful connection with others who have also been affected by adoption.

The overall benefit of participating in the SS JIGSAW social events has been measurable and lasting. I have experienced improved mental well-being, reduced anxiety around identity and belonging, and a deepened capacity for self-compassion and reflection.

These events are not only a source of emotional support; they are a vital service that contributes to the long-term well-being of adoptees. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this beautiful community and would welcome any opportunity to give back and contribute to the support and kindness that has been afforded to me.

Our Profile

Social Media

One in fifteen Australians are impacted by adoption. In Queensland that equals 380,000 people.

Jigsaw Queensland is well known and respected in the national adoption network of government agencies, community organisations and clients who have benefited from our services.

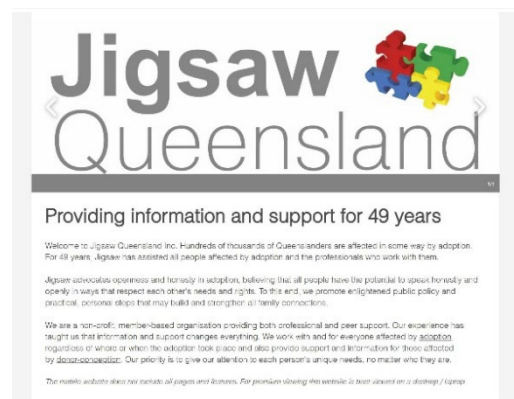
During 2024-2025 we ramped up our social media engagement to spread the word about Jigsaw Queensland and raise awareness about the lifelong impact of adoption. We now have a practice of daily posts on Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as regular Instagram posts about *Adopt Perspective*.

As a result, our Facebook followers have increased by 30% (from 1.1K in July 2024 to 1.4K in July 2025). We have noticed that the adoption community uses our social media platforms to support each other and connect across physical boundaries.



Website

Our website continues to be a foundational source of information and support for people impacted by adoption. During 2024-2025 5,385 people visited the website across 8,267 sessions.



We have seen strong growth (23%) in visitors year-on-year, with increased referrals from Facebook, likely linked to podcast and content promotion.

Our website visitors are highly engaged, with an average session time longer than five minutes.

Key navigation flows suggest the users' journey is focused on education and support, particularly: Homepage → Podcast → Lifelong Issues in Adoption → History of Qld Adoption.

Wednesday mornings are peak view times, which aligns with podcast release days, suggesting strong cross-platform synergy.

The top pages visited were:

- *Adopt Perspective* Podcast
- Support Groups
- Lifelong Issues in Adoption.

During 2024-2025 we made regular improvements to the website including: ongoing updates to the homepage via Latest News; uploading new consent forms, FASS Privacy Policy, and Feedback Form; and removing underperforming pages to streamline navigation and content.

Newsletter

We published four newsletters this year in September, December, March and June. We no longer send print copies of our newsletter by post because the overwhelming majority of people (500+) prefer to receive the newsletter via email.



National Apology

On 21 March 2025 we hosted the 12th National Apology Anniversary event at Victoria Park, Herston. Seventy people (70) attended: 58 in person and 18 via livestream.



Care Expo

On 6 and 7 September 2024 we exhibited at Care Expo Brisbane to promote our services to mature-aged people and raise awareness about the lifelong impact of adoption.

Jigsaw Queensland

Have you been impacted by past adoption practices?

Are you a mother or father who lost a child to adoption?

Information and support changes everything!

CARE EXPO

BRISBANE

SITE P358

Support • Connect • Inform • Advocate

07 3358 6666

www.jigsawqueensland.com

Our Partners

We work with many individuals and agencies to deliver information, support and referral that meets the needs of our clients. Partnering with others is essential for our success because the process of accessing adoption information, and healing from the impact of adoption, is complex and complicated.

Department of Social Services

Our Forced Adoption Support Service has been funded by the Department of Social Services for ten years. We strive to meet the highest standards of performance and reporting in accordance with our funding requirements.



In October 2024 the Department of Social Services launched an introductory, non-accredited online training package called Forced Adoption: Practical Skills and Awareness, which was designed specifically for the aged care and community service sectors. This course

covers the history and impacts of forced adoption practices in Australia and provides practical skills for supporting affected individuals while mitigating the risk of re-traumatisation. This e-learning module is available through the Department of Social Services website.

Queensland Government

We receive a modest amount of funding from the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety. Our team works closely with the Adoption and Permanent Care Services (APCS) team to provide accurate advice and updates to clients who have applied for adoption information. This year we had multiple meetings with members of the APCS team in relation to adoption issues and trends.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

People impacted by adoption rely on our Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (RBDM) when searching for family members: such as seeking a marriage certificate for their mother who may have changed her name or seeking a death certificate when trying to find a relative.

Early in 2025 we requested a meeting with the Registrar-General of RBDM to discuss our organisation, our work and feedback we receive from clients trying to access identifying documents. On 16 April 2025 we met with the RBDM leadership team, and the Registrar-General declared their desire to partner with us on client service delivery, application form design, staff training and implementation of the Donor Conceived Information Register.

VANISH

The Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self-Help (VANISH) is a respected not-for-profit organisation providing support to adults affected by past adoption practices. In July 2024 our new CEO met with the also new VANISH CEO, Michelle Blanchard, and discovered our shared values and approaches to post adoption support. In January 2025 we brought our two teams together for a virtual 'Meet and Greet' and now work together on a regular basis to assist clients in our respective states on their search for reunion.

Post Adoption Support Queensland

We collaborate with The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Support Queensland (PASQ) service to streamline service access for Queensland's adoption community. Our Team Leaders meet on a regular basis to discuss service delivery, trends and issues, and referral pathways.

Queensland Stakeholder Group

We are proud to be a member of Queensland's long-standing stakeholder group of adoption organisations that have been working for decades to advocate for, and achieve, legislative reform that enabled people impacted by adoption to access information about their circumstances and family members. During 2024-2025 we assisted with coordination and communication of informal meetings to support individual members and develop advocacy strategies for current and future challenges.

Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS)

QCOSS is Queensland's peak body for the social service sector. Jigsaw Queensland joined QCOSS in July 2024 and our team has actively engaged with the CEO Network, attended the AGM in November 2024 and the Budget Breakfast in 2025.



In recognition of the unique work we do, and the need to spread the word about the lifelong impact of adoption, QCOSS produced a short video of our President and CEO which was published in November 2024 to coincide with the State Apology Anniversary event.

The DNA Connection

Melanie Dunstan, founder of The DNA Connection, is a Genetic Genealogist and Private Investigator who applies her curiosity and compassion to assist adopted adults use DNA to find family members.

In June 2025 Melanie conducted an online DNA 101 Information Session for people impacted by adoption. 100% of participants found the sessions useful; 85% left with a clearer understanding of what DNA can and cannot tell them; and 76% of participants felt better equipped to decide whether DNA testing is right for them.

All participants thought Melanie was very knowledgeable, and that the information was clear and easy to understand.

Relationships Australia

In 2015 the Commonwealth Government funded one Forced Adoption Support Service in each State and Territory of Australia. Jigsaw Queensland is the only lived experience led FASS in the country. All other FASS services are delivered by Relationships Australia.



We consult and liaise with other FASS services on a regular basis to assist clients and understand the service offerings in other states. In May 2025 our CEO and FASS Team Leader attended a National Post Adoption Services meeting in Adelaide, hosted by Relationships Australia South Australia.

Axis Clinic

Early in 2025 we approached Axis Clinic to enquire about their course *How to Overcome Negative Self Talk and Learning Self Compassion*. Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) is a psychological approach that helps people with shame and self-criticism to develop a more compassionate relationship with themselves and others.



In March Axis Clinic delivered an adapted version of their bespoke course for people in our adoption community. All participants reported an increase in self-compassion intention, tolerance and self-compassionate actions and behaviours.

Annual Client Survey

We are very proud of the results from our 2024-2025 Annual Client Survey, with people reporting strong levels of satisfaction and trust in our service.

100% of survey participants agreed that FASS staff understood adoption issues (84.21% strongly agreed and 15.79% agreed) and that FASS staff were consistently understanding and supportive (89.47% strongly agreed and 10.53% agreed).

100% of survey participants were satisfied with the services provided (94.74% strongly agreed and 5.26% agreed) and would recommend Jigsaw Queensland to other people.

Responses highlighted our team's expertise, with the following recurring themes in participant responses:

- Compassionate understanding and non-judgmental listening
- Feeling less isolated through support groups
- Assistance in initiating contact with relatives
- Gentle, respectful advice and guidance
- Availability and reliability of support, particularly during moments of need

- Emotional safety created by staff with lived and professional experience
- The sense of being heard and validated.



Survey respondents were drawn from diverse geographical areas across Queensland - including South-East Queensland, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, and North Queensland – as well as NSW.

Survey respondents accessed a range of services: assistance with searching for family members, intermediary assistance to reach out to family members, emotional support for adoption-related issues, and peer support at our regular support groups.



ABN 46 336 612 239

You can view our financial report for 2024-2025 on the ACNC website:

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/jigsawqueensland>