

Bits & Pieces



(07) 3358 6666 or 1800 21 03 13 (Qld only) www.jigsawqueensland.com

Climb Beneath the Lights

As part of Jigsaw Queensland's 50th Anniversary commemorations, we invite our community to gather beneath the lights of Brisbane and share in a moment of reflection and connection.

This year, Brisbane's bridges and public spaces will glow in red, blue, green and yellow to honour our 50 years of empowering people to understand, and heal from, the impact of adoption.

Among those illuminated landmarks will be the Story Bridge, Victoria Bridge, Kangaroo Point Bridge and the Reddacliff Place sculptures.

To mark the occasion, members of our community will once again climb the Story Bridge together. Many of you may remember our 40th anniversary climb in 2016, held the year after Jigsaw Queensland began delivering the Forced Adoption Support Service in Queensland. What began as a symbolic adventure, became something much deeper.

As we climbed in single file above the city, each person seemed to enter their own quiet space of reflection - thinking about reunions that happened or never happened, relationships with adoptive and biological families, grief, resilience, healing and identity.

The bridge itself became symbolic of the adoption experience: steep at times, beautiful at times, uncertain at times, but climbed together. One of the most moving parts of the evening was descending from the bridge to find members of our community

waiting below - ready with hugs, congratulations and understanding. It reminded us that even when our journeys feel solitary, we are never truly climbing alone. We would love to recreate that experience again in our 50th anniversary year.

Story Bridge Climb Details

Sunday, 19 July 2026

Arrival: No later than 4.25pm

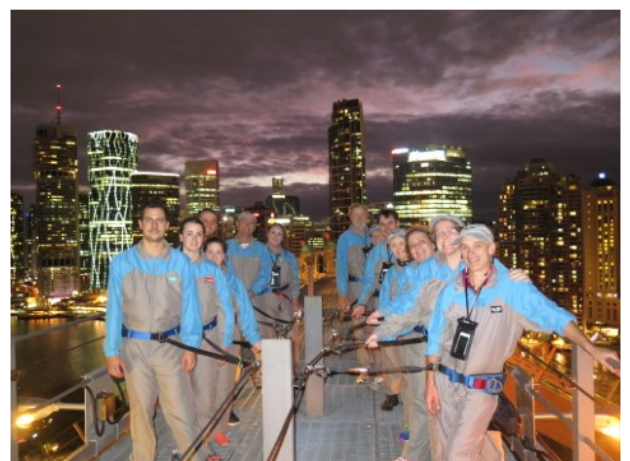
Duration: Approximately 90 minutes

Finish: Around 6.15pm

Location:

Story Bridge Adventure Climb
Howard Smith Wharves
5 Boundary Street, Brisbane
(*Under the Crystalbrook Hotel*)

Story Bridge Adventure Climbs have generously offered us a special price for charities and Jigsaw Queensland will cover the full cost of the climb for participants.



2016 Jigsaw Story Bridge Climb

You can secure your place by emailing support@jigsawqld.org.au. Places are reserved for mothers and fathers who lost children to adoption and adopted people. Because places are strictly limited, and reservations cannot be altered once confirmed, we ask that anyone who secures a place commits fully to attending.

If circumstances change, please let us know as early as possible so another member of our community may have the opportunity to participate. The climb proceeds rain or shine. Full climb suits, weather shells and hats are provided, and the company closely monitors severe weather conditions. Please note there is a climbing weight restriction of 130kg per person.

Gathering at Felons Brewery

For those not participating in the climb - or for those wishing to continue the evening afterwards - we invite you to join us informally at Felons Brewery at Howard Smith Wharves from 5pm onwards.

You may like to gather early to watch the sunset, see the climbers ascending the bridge and experience the city lighting up around us. We'll then welcome the climbers back to ground at approximately 6.30pm. Meals and drinks are at your own expense.

As always with Jigsaw gatherings, there is no right or wrong way to participate. Some may wish to celebrate in community, while others may prefer to quietly visit one of the illuminated sites and reflect privately on what adoption, reunion, loss, healing and belonging mean in their own lives.

As we mark 50 years of Jigsaw Queensland, we hope these illuminated bridges create space for each person to reflect on their own journey and to recognise that for half a century, this community has continued climbing together.

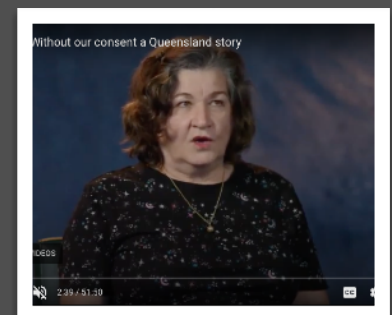


Jigsaw climbers ascend the Story Bridge at our 40th anniversary in 2016

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](#).



Understanding Ancestry DNA

We're thrilled to partner once again with Melanie Dunstan from The DNA Connection to deliver two online information sessions on:

First Steps in Finding Family using Ancestry DNA

The first session is on Saturday, 13 June 2026 from 1pm to 2pm and will cover:

- Ancestry membership levels
- How to explore and understand DNA matches
- Basic clusters
- Building a family tree
- The messaging system

There will be homework to practice what you've learnt so you're ready for the second session on Saturday 27 June from 1pm to 2pm when we'll discuss how you went putting into action what you learnt from the first session.

This exciting opportunity is available to people who were adopted in Queensland or adopted elsewhere in Australia but now reside in Queensland. Both sessions are funded through our Forced Adoption Support Service so there's no cost for participants.



If you'd like to register, just send an email to support@jigsawqld.org.au with your name and postcode. You can find out more about Melanie on her website - <https://www.thednaconnection.com.au/>

Small Grant Funding

Applications for Small Grants Funding are now open. This funding round is for next financial year - 2026/2027.

As Queensland's Forced Adoption Support Service provider, we're partnering with as many individuals and agencies as possible to maximise investment in capacity building and group healing for people in Queensland impacted by adoption.

The Small Grants Program is a component of the funding for the Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS). FASS was

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

Small Grant Funding

Do you have an idea on how to build sector capacity and/or deliver group healing activities for people impacted by forced adoption?



established in 2015 and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

The Small Grants Program aims to build sector capacity and enhance group healing for people impacted by forced adoption.

Small Grants funding can be used for a range of activities that promote well-being for people impacted by forced adoption, such as:

- Capacity-building opportunities focussed on healing, such as training that is appropriate and relevant to assisting people affected by forced adoption.
- Retreats, including facilitation costs, materials, activities, accommodation and meals for participants and facilitators.
- Forced adoption-related group facilitation costs, including the cost to engage a facilitator.
- Forced adoption-related group therapy costs, including the cost of engaging a therapist.
- Workshops and group activities to support healing and peer support.
- Production of memorials, statues, plaques and exhibitions, editing and publishing of books (where there is no profit made by the author, publisher or organisation), cataloguing and digitising of records,

development of online material and videos including temporary hire of professionals.

- Venue and group meeting costs for support and information activities.

If you want to know more, please email support@jigsawqld.org.au and request a copy of the guidelines.

Late Discovery Supports

Finding out later in life that you were adopted can be the start of an unexpected journey filled with questions, emotions, and complex thoughts. The discovery can be a distressing experience, with many people feeling shocked and bewildered.

This is normal and understandable, due to the loss of what you thought was your story and the realisation of not knowing your biological family. In some cases, people have said they felt relieved, particularly if their adoption was not a positive experience.

It is important to remember that any thoughts and feelings you have about discovering you were adopted are valid and a normal part of adjusting to this new information. It is also important to remember that you are not alone.

Many adopted people wonder why their adoption was withheld from them. However, late discovery is not uncommon, as many people were not told of their adoption owing to the cultural norms of the mid-twentieth century. During the Forced Adoption Era in Australia, there was a culture of shame, stigma, and secrecy around adoption. Adoptions were closed, meaning adoption records were sealed and mothers who lost children to adoption were told to never discuss the adoption.

In addition, many adoptive parents felt shame and stigma about infertility and tried to conceal the adoption. While this does not condone the secrecy, this historical context



illustrates how adoption was perceived at the time and explains why many adopted people were not told about their adoption.

After a late discovery of adoption, it can be hard to know where to begin. There is no 'right' way. You can take things at your own pace. Some helpful first steps include:

- **Take time to process what you've learned** - You don't have to make any decisions straight away. It's okay to sit with your thoughts and feelings, even if they feel mixed and they change from day to day.
- **Talk it through with someone you trust** - This might be a counsellor, support worker, or someone close to you. Speaking out loud can help make sense of what you're feeling and help you feel less alone.
- **Connect with other people who may have had similar experiences** - Speaking with people who found out later in life that they were adopted can give a deeper understanding of the significance of this news. It may also help you make sense of your own thoughts and feelings by hearing how others navigated the journey.
- **Write things down as thoughts and feelings arise** - Keeping notes or journaling can help you track questions, thoughts, or emotions as they arise. Writing down how we feel can be a powerful form of release or letting go.
- **Start gathering information when you feel ready** - You may wish to learn more

about your adoption, your history, or your birth family. This can be done gradually, and support is available to guide you through the process.

- **Look after yourself in small, everyday ways** - Self-compassion and self-care are important during difficult times. Simple things like getting enough sleep, eating well, and taking part in activities that help you feel calm can make a difference.

Support is available through our Forced Adoption Support Service. We understand the impact of late discovery of adoption. If you would like to speak with one of our Information and Support Workers call 1800 21 03 13 (from Queensland only) or 07 3358 6666 between 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday.

Reaching out for support can ease feelings of loneliness and isolation and help instil hope. We offer a safe, non-judgemental space to talk about your thoughts and feelings, and what next steps you might want to take. You will be supported to go at your own pace, and can share as much or as little as you like.

You could also consider attending one of our Adoptee Support Groups in New Farm and Toowoomba. But, if you're not able to make it in-person to a support group, our podcast, Adopt Perspective, is a popular way



for people to learn about the impact of adoption by hearing stories from other adopted people.

For example, one recent episode from April 2026 features the story of Caroline, who discovered her own adoption when she was 27 years old. Other episodes about late discovery adoption include: Dr Helen Riley (23/07/2020), Sue (07/07/2020), Heather Kinang (31/05/2023), Peter Capomolla Moore (2/07/2023) and Ryan Anderson (29/10/2025).

Dr Helen Riley, a lived experience late discovery adoption researcher, compiled this [information sheet](#) for Jigsaw Queensland.

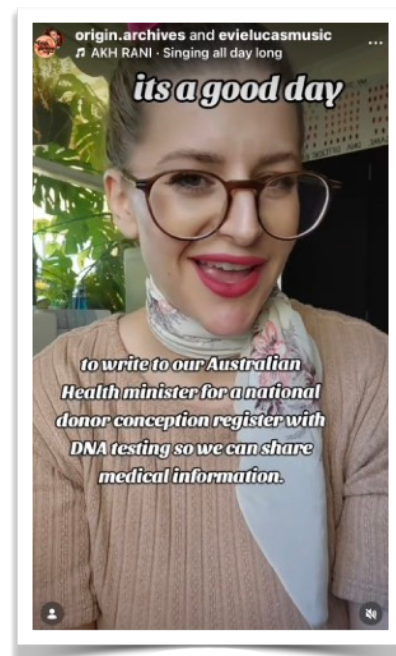
Origin Archives

In a recent episode of [Adopt Perspective podcast](#), we sat down with Katherine Dawson, creator of [Origin Archives](#) - a growing online resource documenting the lived experience and history of donor conception in Australia.

The conversation explored Katherine's personal journey as a donor conceived person and the profound discoveries she has uncovered over time: multiple donor identities, a very large sibling group spread across Australia, and significant inherited health concerns that clinics failed to adequately communicate to donor conceived people and their families.

What emerged most powerfully throughout the discussion was the striking overlap between the experiences of donor conceived people and adopted people - particularly around identity, secrecy, access to information, loyalty, grief, and the lifelong impact of separation from biological origins. Katherine spoke candidly about how her understanding of donor conception changed over time.

What began as curiosity evolved into a much deeper reckoning with questions of truth, ethics, informed consent, family, and medical history. She also described the emotional burden of carrying vital information



You can follow Origin Archives on Instagram @origin.archives.

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.

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



for siblings who may still not know they are donor conceived.

These experiences ultimately led Katherine to create [Origin Archives](#) - an online library of resources, media, legislation, documentaries, podcasts and historical material relating to donor conception in Australia. The project also now includes a podcast of the same name. As Katherine explained, she wanted to ensure these stories, histories and resources were preserved and easily accessible for donor conceived people, families, researchers and the wider community.

For many within the adoption community, there will be familiar themes throughout this conversation. The episode highlights the importance of truth-telling, access to identity and records, informed consent, trauma-informed support, and the value of peer connection and lived experience advocacy.

Importantly, the conversation also reminds us that donor conceived people, people impacted by adoption and surrogacy, and others impacted by family separation are not isolated groups existing in silos.

Increasingly, there is shared recognition of common experiences and a growing understanding that the voices of those directly impacted must be central to conversations about policy, ethics and reform. We thank Katherine for her courage, generosity and advocacy, and for the important work she is doing through [Origin Archives](#). You can listen to the full episode of [Adopt Perspective](#) and explore [Origin Archives](#) online now.

Lived Experience Voices

This year's National Apology Anniversary event, marking 13 years since the Commonwealth Government apologised for past forced adoption policies and practices,

was held at Victoria Park, Herston, on Saturday, 21 March 2026. Sixty-five people attended in person and 32 people registered for the livestream. If you missed out this year, you can view the event on our [Adopt Perspective YouTube page](#).

We have received so much positive feedback from attendees about the speeches from six people with lived experience of forced adoption who shared what healing means for them.

Six individuals. Six unique stories. Six heroic, inspiring journeys. They shared deeply personal experiences, made us laugh and brought some of us to tears. There was a different energy to previous years, after the speeches, as attendees gathered together, catching up with people they hadn't seen for a while or meeting for the first time.

We heard people talk about opportunity and possibility. We heard people care for and comfort one another as they shared their own stories. We heard laughter, joy and connection, which is an important part of the healing journey.

This year we were delighted to welcome four Members of Queensland Parliament to this annual event: Amanda Camm MP, Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child



Lived experience speakers & Pres of Jigsaw Qld - (left to right) Elizabeth English, Di Riddell, Phil Kenward, Jo Sparrow, Philippa Bell, Victoria Bansey & Janet Palmer.



(Left to right) Jo Sparrow - Jigsaw Qld, Trish Large - ALAS, Heather Hermann - Jigsaw Qld, Amanda Camm MP, Judy Glover - Assoc for Adoptees, Kerri Saint - Assoc for Adoptees, Helen Angela Taylor - CEO Jigsaw Qld.

Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence; Corrine McMillan MP, Shadow Minister for Child Safety, Communities and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence; Grace Grace MP, Shadow Minister for Trade, Industrial Relations, Olympic and Paralympic Games and Racing; and Joe Kelly MP, Member for Greenslopes.

Next year's event will be a new venue because Victoria Park closed its doors forever on the weekend to make way for the Olympic Stadium. We will work hard to ensure that next year's event is as inspiring as this year, and we hope you will join us.

**I love Jigsaw!
I cannot get enough of them.
The Apology Anniversary was amazing,
I really enjoyed it.**

Adoptee, March 2026

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 2026. 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 - 15 July, 16 Sept & 18 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

Adoptee Support Group New Farm - For adopted people. (1.30pm - 3.30pm) 11 July, 12 Sept & 14 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

Adoptee Support Group Toowoomba - For adopted people. (1.30pm - 3.30pm) 4 July, 5 Sept & 7 Nov. Venue: Toowoomba City Library Lvl 3 Meeting Rooms, 155 Herries Street, Toowoomba.

Mixed Support Group New Farm - 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) - 6 June, 1 Aug, 3 Oct, 5 Dec. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

Fathers & Sons Online Group - For men who lost a child to adoption; and men who were adopted. The group is run by a psychologist, Michael Chamberlain and the next group is on 16 June from 6pm to 8pm. It's an informal get together via Zoom so men can talk about their experience with men who understand. Email support@jigsawqld.org.au for more information or to book your place.

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