



**10 DECEMBER 2022**

**JIGSAW QUEENSLAND INC.**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

# Support Connect Inform Advocate

## 2021 - 2022

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**T**his year has been a dynamic period in Jigsaw Queensland's history. We began 2022 with a fresh COVID-19 wave as Queensland tentatively reopened their borders. This wave was followed closely by levels of flooding across Queensland not seen at such a scale since the devastating summer of 2011. Once again, Jigsaw needed to adjust their service, peer support and event delivery, and staff and volunteers rose to this challenge.

Owing to a double booking at our usual event space, we quickly had to secure a new venue for the 9th Anniversary of the National Apology and settled on the beautiful rooftop patio of the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) only to have it inundated by floodwaters in the weeks leading up to the event. Thankfully, it reopened just in time for the anniversary. This is just one example of many, where Jigsaw Qld and our Forced Adoption Support staff have responded to circumstances outside our control to ensure ongoing delivery of our high quality services.



9th Anniversary of the National Apology for Past Forced Adoption Policies & Practices at GOMA

## GOVERNANCE

There have been no changes to our Jigsaw Queensland Management Committee this year and once again we have relied heavily on the dedicated work of all our volunteers and committee members to keep Jigsaw directly relevant to persons affected by past adoption.

I would like to offer a heart-felt thank you to our Management Committee team, Secretary - Lois Buch, Treasurer - Robert White and Members - Collette Glazebrook and Heather Herman. Thanks also to our Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) CEO - Dr Trevor Jordan, Team Leader, Caroline Slade and FASS Team Practitioners, Anna Crockett and Rachel Bell for their work this year.

*Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow - President*

*It is not only our longevity, but also our respect for the diversity of adoption experience that has earned Jigsaw Queensland its outstanding reputation as a trustworthy provider of post adoption support and a valued contributor to state and national discussions on permanency and adoption policy and practice. The different colours in our Jigsaw logo represent the diverse ways in which we are all affected by adoption and the unique contribution each of us can make in transforming lives. They also remind us that our colour is not the whole rainbow and that working together and supporting each other on the journey is important. (Trevor Jordan, FASS - CEO)*

## **SUPPORT GROUP REPORTS**

### **Open Group**

In last year's annual report we announced the end of Open Support Group meetings in favour of regular information events. With so many disruptions to our ability to deliver these events and owing to popular demand, we resumed the Open Meetings in August and they have once again been embraced and well attended.

### **Mother's Group**

The Mothers support meeting entered its 25th year in August 2022. We continue to gather at a Mothers' Morning Tea every other month.

I was able to phone regular attendees to remind them that the meeting is coming up and to catch up with them if they cannot attend. I would like to thank Jigsaw for having trust in me to run the meetings for the past 13 years. - Heather

### **Adoptee Group**

As Queensland reopened, support group interest and attendance surged. While we continued to run the groups within COVID-19 guidelines, a strong core of new and long-term attendees have attended the group regularly. We continue to have attendees referred from other service providers who recognise the value of peer-to-peer sharing and support. Melissa has yet again done a great job facilitating the meetings.

## ADOPT PERSPECTIVE PODCAST



The final episodes of Season 3 of Adopt Perspective podcast are now live and Season 4 planning and recording is well underway. The podcast continues to grow and along with the website is one of best tools we have to communicate with people affected by adoption, particularly those who can't attend our peer support groups or other events for a variety of reasons.

This year, we created 896 minutes of new content (that's greater than 91 per cent of other creators in our category). Our three most popular episodes were Nancy Verrier (adoption researcher/author), Evelyn Robinson (Grief & Loss in Adoption) and Jill Rodger (adoptee story). Our podcast loves to travel and was heard in 16 countries. The most popular being Australia, USA, New Zealand, Canada and Norway. Something magical happened in August where we had 107 per cent more listeners compared to our average week.

Our podcast was in Spotify's (our host) top 15 per cent most shared globally. We are in the top 15 per cent of the most followed podcasts globally - 30 per cent of our listeners also follow the podcast. In the past year our streams rose by 218 per cent, followers increased by 163 per cent and listeners increased by 105 per cent.

Adopt Perspective podcast can be listened to on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Deezer, Castbox, Pocket Casts, Amazon Music, Overcast and here: <https://www.jigsawqueensland.com/podcast>.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### 9th National Apology Anniversary Event

Even floods couldn't stop the commemoration of this year's national apology, held on the roof terrace, Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA). With flood debris still floating down the Brisbane River, people affected by forced adoptions gathered to remember. It was poignant to reflect on the resilience of our community while the river and so much of Queensland was still in the beginning stages of recovery.

A highlight of this year's event was the personal experiences of reunion shared by Sue Bond (adoptee), Vivienne Timmermans (mother) and Allan Hill & Chris Mundy (father & son). At the conclusion of their shared stories, there were few dry eyes. Reunion isn't possible for all who are impacted and fewer still experience a smooth road; however, the stories we heard reflected hope, strength and a determination to move forward.



Sue Bond, Vivienne Timmermans, Chris Mundy & Allan Hill share their experiences at 9th apology anniversary.

## DNA Virtual Info Session

Our Forced Adoption Support Service held their first virtual Information Session for 2022 in May. The interactive session was led by Diane Cuff (Search Angel), who spoke about the use of DNA to track mothers, fathers and other relatives.

The event was less workshop and more question and answer session and a great opportunity for attendees to ask specific questions related to their own search and how DNA can be used in conjunction with adoption records and intermediary services to lead to reunion.

The group also discussed the tools that can be used to connect people affected by adoption with their families. This was the first virtual information session we've held and based on feedback, it is hoped they will become a regular event.

### Introduction to DNA for adopted people

How can DNA help me find my family?



#### Virtual Information Session

Join us via Zoom on Wednesday, 25 May from 3pm to 5pm to find out how DNA can help you find your family. DNA Search Angel, Diane Cuff will take us through the tools she uses to connect people affected by adoption with their families.

The session will cover:

- \* Introduction to DNA (testing process).
- \* Recommended "do's & don'ts" for adoptees.
- \* What does your match list tell you?
- \* How to begin?

When: Wed, 25 May

Where: Via Zoom (a link will be sent after you RSVP to the event)

Time: 3pm to 5pm

RSVP: E: [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au) or call (07) 3358 6666 by 5pm, Friday 20 May.

*Have a notebook and pen handy to take notes.*

#### How can FASS help?

The Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) at Jigsaw Queensland is a free post adoption service which offers support, information, and referrals for people affected by past adoption - mothers, fathers, adopted people and extended family. FASS is staffed by professionals with experience and knowledge of the impacts of adoption. We offer telephone, face to face and online support with adoption related issues. And information on accessing your adoption records, information and assistance with searching for and making contact with your relatives and maintaining post contact relationships and more.



**Forced Adoption Support Services**  
Funded by the Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

## Queensland Govt Donor Conceived Hearings & Report

On 13 May the Queensland Government hearings into matters relating to donor conception information took place at Parliament House.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee heard from a number of courageous donor conceived people, donors, donor recipient parents and representatives of organisations such as Donor Conceived Australia, as well as Jigsaw Queensland to determine whether a statutory register of donor conception information should be established in Queensland as well as other issues.

Following on from this, the Committee returned their recommendations including one for retrospective access to records. These recommendations are a great beginning point and present the Queensland Government with the opportunity to right the wrongs of the past.



## 2022 Retreat for Adopted People

From the 7-9 October (2022), Jigsaw Qld's Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) held a retreat for adopted people at Cedar Creek Lodges in idyllic Mt Tamborine.

The theme of the weekend was 'finding joy' and participants fully embraced this search. In an atmosphere of safety, companionship and surrounded by rainforest, the group found common ground and mutual support.

In addition to a beautiful backdrop, the accommodation and menu provided by Cedar Creek Lodges was superb.

The retreat was possible through a partnership between Jigsaw Qld's Forced Adoption Support Service and Association for Adoptees and was funded by the Small Grants program Forced Adoption Support Services.



Attendees at the 2022 Retreat for Adopted People at Cedar Creek Lodges

## The AdopTEA

Jigsaw Queensland once again supported the AdopTEA initiative, created by stakeholder, Judy Glover, both financially (funding some morning tea events) and running our own event.

AdopTEA morning tea events are run during Queensland Mental Health Week in October and are aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the impacts of adoption on adopted people and reducing the stigma associated with reaching out and seeking support.

The events bring together adopted people, their families and friends, post-adoption support workers and professionals. Our FASS team took to the streets of New Farm and handed out morning tea in a bag, which included a teabag, lolly and information about our support service.



Kirsteen & Anna hand out 'morning tea in a bag'.

## FORCED ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE

This year the FASS team has assisted mother's, fathers, adopted people and other family members with information, emotional support, family tracing, intermediary services and referrals.

In addition to the events above, FASS has worked towards educating mental health professionals and organisations about the affects of adoption and creating referral networks. This year, FASS Practitioner, Anna Crockett visited 8 aged care facilities in Ipswich and the service has begun creating networks within the Queensland prison system. FASS Team Leader, Caroline Slade joined Jigsaw President, Jo Sparrow in speaking to the counselling teams at of CatholicCare (Central West & Toowoomba regions) in order to establish regional networks. Caroline also delivered a presentation at Child Protection week to the South East region Team Leaders and will continue to present at these events.

FASS has sourced a new external supervisor and the first Supervisor / professional development session was held this morning at the Springfield Library. Supervision is required by our funding agreement and is essential in the delivery of our service.

The FASS team held a Christmas stakeholder lunch to celebrate partnership and collaboration on the 7th December at the Jigsaw Qld offices. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all.



CatholicCare Counselling Team Leader, Leah Millward, Caroline Slade and Jo Sparrow meet in Toowoomba.

We thank the Queensland Government's, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs for their continuing support of our peer support services. This contribution is crucial for our volunteer engagement with all those affected by adoption.



**Queensland Government**



**Forced Adoption  
Support Services**

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