

# Bits & Pieces



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

## While you're waiting...

*By Simone Gott (Team Leader - Forced Adoption Support Service)*

The first step in searching for information, answers and relatives begins with obtaining adoption records. Applying for adoption information can be a daunting experience. For many, it can take considerable time to build up the courage to start the application process. Once the application has been submitted, the anticipation and waiting period can feel agonising and frustrating. The uncertainty and longing for answers can be a heavy weight to bear.

A common question we hear from people who have applied for their adoption records is: 'So what now?' It's an important question so we're sharing some ideas on navigating this challenging time.

### Understand the process and what information you may receive

Knowing what to expect and understanding the process can help to reduce anxiety. Usually, once you have submitted your application you will receive an acknowledgment letter from the relevant state adoption service/department. Wait times can vary from state to state, but it can take some time to receive your records.

In Queensland before you receive your records, a staff member from Adoption and Permanent Care Services will call to talk you through your records to help prepare you to receive them.

We also have information sheets on preparing for your adoption records which can be accessed on our website, or a copy can be obtained by calling Jigsaw on 07 3358 6666 or 1800 21 03 13 (Qld only).

### Self-Care

Looking after yourself during stressful and emotional times is important. Engaging in activities that you enjoy, or that help you relax, can support your mental and emotional wellbeing. Activities, such as mindfulness, can be helpful in managing strong emotions, calming the nervous system and reducing rumination.

Writing your thoughts down or journaling can be a powerful self-care tool. It can help you to clarify your thoughts and emotions, provide a safe outlet for worries and frustrations, and offer you an opportunity to document your story.

And while it sounds obvious, it's important to try to get good quality sleep, ensure you are eating well, and drinking enough water. These basic necessities help



fuel your body and mind, aid in repair and regeneration, and support mood stability.

### Reach out for support

Connecting with others who have been impacted by adoption can be helpful. Sharing experiences and stories with others who have walked a similar path can offer reassurance and comfort. Support groups are a great way to connect with others who understand what you're going through.

Post adoption support services, such as Jigsaw Queensland, are here to provide emotional support and assistance. We can also help advocate on your behalf if you feel you need some additional assistance with your application or situation.

### Read about adoption, search and reunion

Reading and listening to other people's personal stories relating to adoption can be helpful in validating your feelings. It can also provide insight into other people's journeys and perspectives and offer practical advice on managing different situations.

Understanding the search and reunion process can help you decide what next steps you may want to take when you receive your information.

It can also give you a head start on how to go about looking for relatives and

suggestions on options for reaching out to them.

### Prepare for the next steps

You may find it helpful to take this time to consider what you want to do once you receive the information.

Initially, you might just be seeking some details about your birth and adoption, and that might be enough for now. Alternatively, you may be hoping to search for, and connect with, biological relatives. It can be a good time to consider your hopes and expectations, as well as possible outcomes. Knowing what you hope to achieve and preparing for different scenarios



can help you emotionally prepare for the journey ahead.

Importantly, you don't have to walk this road alone. We can provide information and support when applying for adoption information, and assist with search and reunion, including the option to act as an intermediary, where we make the initial contact with your relative on your behalf.

We are here to provide emotional support along the way so that you know you can talk to people who understand the impact of adoption.

## Say 'Hello' to Simone

One year ago this month, Simone Gott joined our team, so we thought it's time you got to know a little bit about her.

Simone, our Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) Team Leader, has been a key driver of many of the positive changes we've seen here at Jigsaw Queensland. We asked her to reflect on her experience, her role and our organisation.

### Tell us about your professional experience and interests.

I have more than 20 years' experience working in the community sector, supporting a range of people, predominantly in the mental health space. I'm passionate about supporting people to overcome barriers and

walking alongside them as they work through life's challenges. Ever since I can remember, I've always taken on a caring role, first in my family then in my career. It never felt like a conscious choice; more like something I was meant to do.

I have a strong professional interest in social justice, a firm belief in the need to safeguard people's rights, and a determination to advocate for people when the system has let them down.

After many different roles across service delivery, case management,



*Simone Gott, FASS Team Leader*



Forced Adoption  
Support Services

leadership and program management, I recently went ‘back to school’ and completed postgraduate studies in counselling. I’d missed that connection to individual human beings and, as a lifelong learner, I wanted to develop my skills in therapeutic support.

Turns out to have been perfect timing because it helps me build trust and rapport with people who call us here at Jigsaw. Being fully present and hearing someone’s story, and meeting them where they are at, is so important.

### **What does a typical day look like in your role as Team Leader?**

No two days are the same, I can assure you! Generally, it’s a dynamic mix of different tasks, such as supporting the team, answering the phone, reflecting on service delivery and identifying areas where we can grow and improve. I know how hard it can be for someone to pick up the phone and call us, so I want to make sure that they get what they need when they do.

I also collaborate with the CEO and President on key projects, liaise with stakeholder groups, and advocate with government agencies to explore options and find solutions to complex problems. I have a strong commitment to service excellence, and I am passionate about trauma-informed and people-oriented support services.

From my community sector experience, I also know the importance of accurate, meaningful data, both qualitative and quantitative, to explain the value of what we do and ensure legislative compliance at both the State and Federal level.

### **What do you find most fulfilling in your role?**

It’s such a privilege to be the FASS Team Leader. We support people who’ve been through so much trauma and adversity, which means they need to trust us with their truth



and vulnerability so we can support them wherever they are on their journey.

This is the privilege – walking alongside people on that journey, sharing some of their most precious moments and memories. It’s also very fulfilling to have the opportunity to build on the remarkable work already done by Jigsaw for so many years. I get very excited about what we can do in addition to everything we’re already doing! I love opportunities to be creative and innovative in program and service delivery. And we have a really great team – we support one another, we laugh together, on the good days and the days that are a bit tougher than the rest.

### **How would you describe our organisation?**

Jigsaw Queensland is incredibly welcoming and supportive of staff and people who access our services. We’re a small but mighty team with a real sense of camaraderie. I’ve really enjoyed joining an organisation with such a respected history of supporting people impacted by adoption.

Every day I see our collective commitment and passion to be leaders in the field of post adoption support and system reform. Everyone I work with is striving to be

**'Thanks for just being there.  
I don't know what I would do  
without the support.'**

Adopted person, January 2025

more, to do more. Our work is a vocation not just a job. It can be difficult finding a workplace with such a strong sense of belonging and connection. After my first few months here, it felt like I am where I'm meant to be.

## Message from our CEO

On 21 March 2013 Prime Minister Julia Gillard offered an apology on behalf of the nation to Australians affected by forced adoption and removal practices. After the event in the Great Hall, motions of apology were moved in the House of Representatives and the Senate. A copy of the Apology is on permanent display at Parliament House. If you haven't watched the apology, you can find the video link [here](#):

This month we're proud to host the 12th Anniversary event to mark this important milestone in our nation's journey to heal the lifelong impact of adoption on hundreds and thousands of Australians. Mind you, when the National Apology was delivered, I was oblivious. At that stage in my life, I'd reunited with my birth mother and birth father who had both since died; I'd been estranged from my adoptive parents for nine

years; and I was working hard to suppress the pain associated with separation from my mother at birth and my challenging adoptive family. I tried every possible way to push down the pain because I was terrified that if I let myself feel it, I wouldn't be able to cope. My pain felt like a tidal wave that I couldn't possibly survive.


But attending Jigsaw Queensland's apology event last year was enlightening and inspiring. Coming together with so many other people who were impacted by forced adoption helped me feel part of a community, and a cause, that is dear to my heart. After the event, I reflected on why it's important for us to mark this occasion each year.


We need to remember the inhumane, unethical and illegal practices that took place during Australia's forced adoption era. Those of us directly impacted remember every day. It's a part of who we are. But most Australians don't understand the lifelong impact of adoption because they've been trained to see


Your invitation to  
the 12th Anniversary of the  
Australian Government's  
**National Apology  
for Forced Adoptions**

**Date:** Friday 21 March 2025  
**Time:** 10am to 12pm  
**Location:** Victoria Park Function Venue (Quartz Room)  
309 Herston Road, Herston  
**RSVP by:** Tuesday 11 March 2025  
**Email:** support@jigsawqld.org.au  
or phone 07 3358 6666

**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**

 **ALAS**  
Adoption Loss Adult Support  
Australia Inc.  
Association for Adoptees Inc.  
Through sharing we heal

 **Jigsaw  
Queensland**

 **Forced Adoption  
Support Services**

adoption as only ever a 'good thing' for the child. But decades of research, inquiries and reports in multiple countries have shown that the lifelong trauma associated with adoption is real and significant. So, we need our nation to remember.

We need to honour the remarkable effort of so many people over decades that brought about that powerful moment in Canberra on 21 March 2013. The history of adoption advocacy in Australia is a tale of tenacity, tears and triumph. People who were grieving the profound loss associated with adoption still managed to find the drive and energy to write letters, petition governments, and advocate for reform. Many of them are still doing this noble work because our fight for social justice continues. Some of these people have since passed, but their service is recognised by many groups across the country. So, it's important that we honour them.

We need to recover because adoption has a lifelong impact on everyone involved. The Australian Government, and certain State and Territory Governments, have funded support services to help us heal. But they can only do so much. There is always a finite amount of money available for social services. I encourage everyone impacted by adoption to access available services. But I also encourage each of us to invest the time and energy into our own healing, because

that is one way we take back our power. The pain runs deep, the emotions are strong, and the impact is significant. However, we can take small steps, one at a time, to heal each beautiful part of us.

I'd love to see you at our 12th Anniversary event marking the National Apology for Forced Adoptions. We can remember, honour and recover together.

## SS Jigsaw - Simply Social



We're delighted to invite you to our second SS JIGSAW activity for 2025! What does SS JIGSAW mean? It stands for 'Simply Social' Jigsaw. We know that every single person in our adoption community is caring, fun and amazing but we don't get to hang out together in a casual way.



That's why we've created SS JIGSAW. Once a month from February to November this year we will host a social activity for people impacted by adoption.

We held our first event in February, where we boogied the night away at *No Lights No Lycra* in Brisbane.

If you'd like to join us for our second outing, we'll be walking through Toohey Forest at Nathan for an hour or two on Saturday 22 March 2025. We'll meet at 3pm on Toohey Road.

If you'd like to join us just send an email to [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au).



## Newsletter

Our *Bits & Pieces* newsletter is published four times a year. The newsletter is no longer printed but is available on our

**'Excellent service BTW ...  
Our call last week  
helped enormously.'**

Adopted person, January 2025

## I wish I knew

*By Helen Angela Taylor, CEO of Jigsaw Queensland.*

Your patient file stated that my birth was routine. I disagree.

When I was born you gave me away to complete strangers. Government calls it adoption. Psychologists call it abandonment. I don't have a name for it even though it's the canvas upon which my whole life has been painted.

People said you gave me away so I could have a better life. Better than what? I wish I knew.

When I was thirteen Mum told me she wasn't my Mum. Well, not my 'real' Mum. I said, what does that mean? She said, it means you're special. But I felt different. Other. Odd.

For eighteen years I wondered about you. What you looked like. Where you lived. Why you didn't want me. Whether you wondered about me, too. I searched for you in the crowd at the local shops, and on the train platform on the way to school.

When I was thirty-one we met for the first time in a seedy hotel on the city fringe. I brought flowers, and a heart begging for belonging. You brought a pile of loose photos from your past. Some black and white, some colour. Faces of people I'd never met. We parted without touching. Not even a hug. I phoned the next day to thank you. You didn't return my call. I don't know why. I wish I knew.

When I was forty we met again in a noisy nursing home in the western suburbs. You shared a tiny room with a skeletal woman who kept crying out for cigarettes. You looked different. Mellow. You wanted to know all about me, you had many questions. But it was hard to talk in that cramped room with the crazy lady in the next bed.

You said sorry. You cried. You sobbed. I held your hand. I held back my tears. Until you said I was beautiful.

When I was forty-four you died. The brother I've never met buried you next to the sister I've never met. He tried to find me so I could attend your funeral. Even posted an ad in the paper seeking me out. I didn't see the ad. I don't know why. I wish I knew. I wish I knew.

I wish I knew you.

[website](#), our [Facebook](#) page, our [LinkedIn](#) profile, and via email. This means the money we used to spend on colour printing in newsletter format as well as postage can be re-directed towards service delivery for anyone affected by adoption. If you still like to feel the pages between your fingers, it's easy to print yourself at home. If you don't have access to a printer then perhaps a friend or loved one could print it for you.

## AXIS Clinic Partnership

Jigsaw Queensland are committed to empowering people to understand, and heal from the impact of adoption.

That's why we've partnered with Axis Clinic to deliver *Overcoming Negative Self-Talk and Learning Self-Compassion*, a group program designed to help participants cultivate self-compassion and address difficulties related to shame, self-criticism, and relational and attachment trauma.

Now in its third week, our two courageous groups are meeting face-to-face and online for a total of eight weeks.

Healing from the impacts of adoption is a deeply personal journey, and self-compassion is an essential part of that process.

By offering both in-person and online participation, we aim to make this support as accessible as possible, no matter where in Queensland someone is located. We are incredibly grateful to our participants for their openness and commitment to this program, and we look forward to hearing about the positive impact it has in their lives.



## 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 - 19 March, 21 May, 16 July, 17 Sept & 19 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

**Adoptee Support Group** - For adopted people. (1.30pm - 3.30pm) 8 March, 10 May, 12 July, 13 Sept & 8 Nov. Venue: ground floor meeting room at 505 Bowen Tce, New Farm.

**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) - 5 April, 7 June, 2 Aug, 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, please keep an eye on our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).