

# CBERS Redress Service

## NEWS UPDATE

CBERS Redress Service is an independent support service funded by the Department for Communities

JUNE 2010

### New Find and Connect Service announced

The Federal Government will fund a new \$26.5 million *Find and Connect Service* to help care leavers to locate personal and family history files, and to assist them to reunite with members of their families, where possible.

The new service was announced by Minister Jenny Macklin on May 13<sup>th</sup>, and will combine existing state records in a searchable database that can be accessed by care leavers and care leaver services.

Care leavers will be assisted to access and search the online database and to apply for relevant files, including Freedom of Information (FOI) applications.

The Australia-wide service will also include:

- a national 1800 number with trained operators to assist in locating personal records;
- a national network of specialised staff to help care leavers locate and access personal records and, where possible, reunite with family members.
- Access to counsellors and other support services where required; and



- new counselling support services, specifically for care leavers, from appropriately trained providers to provide support for care leavers as they trace their families.

The Find and Connect Service is one of the commitments made by the Federal Government when the Prime Minister apologised to the estimated 500,000 children and 7,000 child migrants placed in institutional or out of home care in the last century.

The new service will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including care leavers and state and territory governments.

Priority access will be offered to care leavers who are aged or terminally ill.

### Help for Redress WA applicants

New services funded by the Department for Communities will provide greater support for Redress WA applicants during the assessment and payment phase of the scheme.

Under the new arrangements, CBERS Redress Service and several other service providers can now respond to requests for individual counselling and

assistance from Redress applicants.

A capped number of sessions is available to people who request counselling or practical support during the remainder of the scheme. For further information contact CBERS (1800-621-805) or the Redress WA Helpline (1800-617-233).

### Residential Healing Retreats

Mayumarri Healing Retreats can be life changing for survivors of child abuse.

The 5-day residential program is run by survivors who have received extensive training and are supervised by clinical psychologists.

Mayumarri began in NSW in 1999, and now has centres in Queensland, Victoria and WA. Mayumarri WA is coordinated by Eeve Knight, a survivor of child abuse who turned her life around after attending

a Mayumarri retreat, and now helps others to share her journey of healing.

In Australia, one in four girls and one in seven boys are abused before the age of 16. Mayumarri has so far helped over 3,500 men, women and children to heal at their retreats, and has provided advice and support to a further 15,000 people. Healing Retreats in WA are held at the Apex Holiday Centre in Rockingham. The next two Retreats are scheduled for 22nd-27th August and 31st Oct-5th Nov 2010.

This is a unique opportunity for redress applicants. For further information, phone Eeve Knight on 0429-979-074 or visit [www.mayumarri.com.au](http://www.mayumarri.com.au).



child abuse who turned her life around after attending

## Support Groups: *Bringing together people with a shared experience*

Weekly support groups have been running in Fremantle since October last year, and are making a real difference in the lives of some redress applicants. Recent comments from group members include:

*By speaking to others, I've been able to open up and have gained a lot of friends.* (Lyn)

*I felt shy at first but it was easy after the first few minutes with the facilitator and the group and we got to know each other.* (Brendan)

*What I like most about the group is the friendliness.* (Ann)

*It helps to talk to others that have been in the 'same boat' as me.* (Lee)

According to group facilitator Susy Vaughan, "the group is very friendly and welcomes new members. There's lots of laughter and sharing of ideas and experiences. People say they feel understood and valued. They enjoy coming and so do I!"

Redress support groups are held in the same

building as the CBERS office at 24 High Street Fremantle, from 10am to 12 noon on Wednesdays. Morning tea is provided.

For more information and bookings call the CBERS office on 1800-621-805.



ConnectGroups is the peak body for support groups across WA. It links groups to information and community networks, assists with support group development and management, and provides individual and group skills training. Everything offered is free of charge to members (including membership itself!).

Support groups are open to all members of the community and focus on a wide range of problems such

as depression, anger, and family violence, as well as personal development groups that focus on topics such as building confidence and self esteem, personal growth, health, and wellness.

Connect Groups also offer training workshops for support group leaders to help groups become self-sustaining.

Contact ConnectGroups on:

Freecall: 1800-195-575

Phone: (08) 9228-4488

Web: [www.connectgroups.org.au](http://www.connectgroups.org.au)

Email: [info@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:info@connectgroups.org.au)

## Care Leavers Australia Network



Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN) is a national support and advocacy network representing people who were bought up in the 600+ Australian children's homes and orphanages,

and those put in foster care. Its prime objective is to raise community awareness of Care Leaver issues, and campaign for government assistance to redress them.

Being raised without your family has lifelong implications that can require lifelong support services. CLAN provides information, understanding and emotional support, and has a counsellor available for Care Leavers and their families.

CLAN publishes a bi-monthly newsletter sent to all our members containing articles and contributions from members, such as:

- \* Members' personal stories
- \* Information on accessing your state ward files
- \* Details of support and counselling services
- \* How to locate lost family members and friends in our 'Where are they now?' section
- \* Details on the progress of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care
- \* Books in our library which can help and inform
- \* Regular socials in all states where you can talk to others who have had similar experiences or just enjoy one other's company.

For information on CLAN and how to become a member please visit [www.clan.org.au](http://www.clan.org.au) or call 1800-008-774. To make an appointment with the CLAN counsellor for telephone or face-to-face counselling, please call during business hours for either a Monday or Friday appointment.

## Forgotten Australians memorial

Significant developments regarding the memorial for 'Forgotten Australians' have taken place since the last update was provided.

Judith Forrest was chosen as the artist and Terri-Anne White was selected as writer/author for the wording on the memorial. Judith and Terri-Anne will work together with Forgotten Australians Committee representatives to bring the project to conclusion. The Forgotten Australians Committee was established in June 2007 and its representatives are:

*Peter Bent*

*Geoff Caruthers*

*Paul Irvine*

*Veronica and Daryl McPherson*

*Anna and Tom Shepherd*

*Elaine Smith*

*a Dept. for Child Protection representative*

The location for the Memorial has been decided and approval given for use of the grassed area in front of the Jubilee Building of the WA Museum, adjacent to Beaufort Street.

The launch for the Memorial is expected to take place early December. Information regarding the date and time of the launch will be provided prior to the event.

*Marie Waldeck*

*Manager Information Management Services*

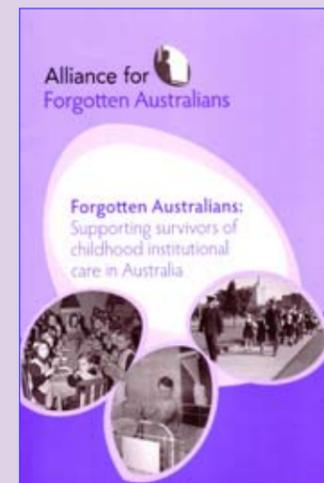
*Department for Child Protection*

*Phone: (08) 9222-2555*

## The Alliance for Forgotten Australians

AFA (the Alliance for Forgotten Australians) is an amalgamation of existing groups and individuals supporting people who were raised in institutional or other out-of-home care in Australia in the 20th century. AFA's aim is to promote the interests of 'Forgotten Australians' through cooperative advocacy and projects.

To learn more about AFA's aims, priorities and activities, visit their website: [www.forgottenaustralians.org.au/index.html](http://www.forgottenaustralians.org.au/index.html)



Alliance for Forgotten Australians,  
PO Box 83,  
Campbell ACT 2612  
Ph: (02) 6273 4885  
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## Oral History Project



The National Library of Australia is seeking interviewees for the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project.

The Library plans to record several hundred people from all over Australia talking about their experiences in institutional care. If participants agree, their interviews will be available on the Library's website.

Since the Australian Government's apology in November 2009, many people have expressed interest in being interviewed for this project. The Library will be selecting interviewees whose stories will reflect a diversity and complexity of experiences.

The Library began recording interviews from March 2010 and the project will run for three years. As well as interviews, the Library is interested in collecting related materials including photographs, posters, badges, reunions, diaries and published autobiographies.

The Library is working closely with the National Museum of Australia, which is developing an exhibition about the history of institutionalised care of children, and there is a joint website for these two national history projects at <http://forgottenaustralianshistory.gov.au/>

If you would like to express interest in being interviewed, complete the form at [www.nla.gov.au/oh/fafcm](http://www.nla.gov.au/oh/fafcm) or contact Joanna Sassoon on 1800-204-290 (cost of a local call from a landline), or email [jsassoon@nla.gov.au](mailto:jsassoon@nla.gov.au)

## FACT WA Inc.

FACT (Forgotten Australians Coming Together) Inc. is committed to the goal of securing a resource centre for WA care leavers similar to those in Victoria (Open Place), Queensland (Esther Centre) and NSW (ARC). These services were established as a result of the apologies and recommendations of Senate inquiries.

WA also needs to establish a service to meet the needs of people coming out of care or who were in care at any time to get access to information and assistance with services such as housing, aged care and employment. Counselling and health services are priority needs and I strongly advocate the introduction of a Gold Card for Forgotten Australians.

### Late news item!!!

The Federal Member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke, notified me this week that she has been kindly asked to present representatives of Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants in this State with the flag flown over Parliament House on the day of the National apology.

It is a privilege that we, in Western Australia, will have a permanent reminder of this historic occasion.

*Laurie Humphreys*

*Chairman, FACT Inc. PO Box 9052, Subiaco WA 6008*

## *Finding help to heal*

There is no doubt that this stage of the Redress WA scheme is difficult for many applicants as they wait to hear about the assessment of their applications and receive an offer of payment. This is an anxiety-provoking process and can feed into a fear of not being believed, particularly for people who were disbelieved as children when they tried to tell someone about their abuse.

Intrusive thoughts and recurring memories are common problems described by redress applicants at this time. Some people found that that preparing their application lifted the lid off memories that had been locked away for years, if not decades, and now the memories and thoughts won't go away. This happens because the feelings prompted by these traumatic memories are demanding to be expressed, and although it is a natural reaction to try and lock away bad memories and never talk about them, it does not help us to move forward with our lives, and part of us stays 'stuck' at the age the trauma occurred.

Sometimes people are reluctant to let themselves feel the deep emotions arising from childhood abuse because they fear being overwhelmed or losing control

of their feelings, however this *does not happen*. Instead, when feelings are experienced in a supported and safe way we gain *greater* control over our emotions, and can finally get relief from unresolved feelings bubbling away just below the surface.

Trying to block out bad experiences creates more problems as we have to put more and more effort into avoiding the memories and anything likely to trigger them. This internal process can show up as anger and rage (outward expression), or depression and anxiety (inward expression).

If any of the things described here strike a chord with you, then why not take steps to make some positive changes in your life? This stage of the redress scheme provides a unique opportunity to access help to work through the 'unfinished business' of your childhood.

And don't tell me you're 'too old'! It's never too late to achieve a greater sense of wellbeing and peace of mind.

*Dr Philippa White*  
*CBERS Redress Service*

## *CBERS Redress Service*



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CBERS Redress Service is an independent support service funded by the Department for Communities to provide assistance to Redress WA applicants.

**CBERS does not have any influence on Departmental decisions** regarding the level of payments offered to Redress applicants and is **not involved in the assessment or processing of applications.**

All such enquiries should be directed to the Redress WA Helpline.

## **Contact Redress WA**

Freecall: 1800 617 233  
(charges apply from mobiles)  
Landline: (08) 6217-8720  
(Standard call charges apply)  
9.00 – 4.30pm (WST) Mon – Fri  
Email: [info@redress.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@redress.wa.gov.au)  
Web: [www.redress.wa.gov.au](http://www.redress.wa.gov.au)