



Merry Christmas



	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
AM	10am – 11:30am Cooking Demo	9am – 5pm Peer Lunch	Closed until 12noon 9:45am – 3pm *Fishing (fortnightly)	9:30 – 10:30am Mindful Movement (fortnightly) (starts 25 th Jan)	
PM	1pm – 3pm Monday in-house Movie	1:30 – 3:30pm *Darts West End Community House		1 – 3pm *4101 Arts Collective (starts 24 th Jan)	2pm-4pm *Music

*indicates activity run by The Hive. If you are interested in attending any activities please contact Lotus Place.



Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of the National Apology: This year we did something a little different

On 16th November 2009, the Australian Government formally apologised to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants for the neglect and abuse many experienced during their time in care during the last century.

Every year Lotus Place holds an event to commemorate the anniversary of the National Apology.

This year we did something a little different. We marked the occasion with celebration and the arts. On Wednesday 19th November 2014 we held two events: an Afternoon Tea and Art Workshop during the day at Lotus Place and the Songs of Justice Celebration Concert with supper in the evening at The Edge Auditorium, State Library Queensland.

Forgotten Australians, Former British Child Migrants, friends and supporters were invited to celebrate together.

At the Art workshop people made flowers and added them to the Justice Tree. Each person was invited to decorate paper flower petals with words



and colour representing some of the good things in their lives and the changes they are grateful for. Now the Justice tree is flowering.

At about 5pm there was a big storm. The traffic was at a standstill, there was water everywhere and trains in the city were stopped, but the show went on. It started off with a beautiful welcome to country by Tina, then Peter, as MC for the evening, invited Christine to the stage, she got everyone moving and rocked their socks off. The FAN Theatre Drama Group (Gloria, Bryan, Lana, Marlene, Malcolm, Jessie, Pearl, Frank, Tina) powerfully perform "Forgotten No More". They received a standing ovation. 'With One Voice Brisbane' Choir performed for us – Jessie, Colleen, Marlene and Katie joined with the Choir on stage for their set. When the choir sang "Stand By Me"

everyone joined in and at the end the audience called out "encore, encore". Then we had Frank crooning for us. Ken and Gloria each beautifully performed individual written works. The Auditorium was pumping with an upbeat atmosphere for the whole night. People were having a fantastic time dancing, clapping and singing along. It was a lot of fun.

"I thought it was the best apology event we have ever had, both the afternoon and evening events. It was positive, personal, low key and fabulous"

"...It was good. I enjoyed it. Should have it like that every year"

"...I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I found their confidence very inspiring..."



Lotus Place
ADVOCACY JUSTICE COMMUNITY

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ROYAL COMMISSION SUPPORT SERVICE AT LOTUS PLACE

Did you know that since we started supporting people with the Royal Commission here at Lotus Place, we have had a total of 2068 contacts with 218 people? So far we have helped 87 of them to write statements and 34 with talking to the Commission directly in private sessions or public hearings?

It is important that if you want to make a connection with the Royal Commission you do so sooner rather than later to share your experience as many people are seeking to meet with the Commission and there is a waiting period.

The best way to make sure you are included is to register now.

Lotus Place staff are able to assist you in a number of ways to talk about your experience to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We can assist you to:

- Contact the Royal Commission and register you for a private session
- Access any documentation
- Help you put your thoughts and experiences into a statement
- Help you to write about the impact on your life
- Help you put your thoughts and ideas together about how government and churches should be responding.
- Support you when attending a private session with a Commissioner from the Royal Commission
- Provide you with information about your options
- Link you with other organisations and people that can support you in your local area.
- Access counselling and support

If you would like our assistance please call us on **07 3055 8500** or **1800 16 11 09** or email us at lotus@micahprojects.org.au

On the first Tuesday of each month, as part of the Tuesday get together, Selina and Sean provide an update on what is happening with the Royal Commission and are available to answer questions people may have.

POETS CORNER

Tree of Life by Karen Connolly

If only I could be a tree,
Tall and solid as can be,
Stretching out my arms to thee,
To give these shade and comfort be,
I give thee breath and thine to me,
We share in perfect harmony,
This blissful planet that we call earth.
Its' greens and blues in perfect hues
Profound in all its solitude.
The mists surround me in the morn,
A cleansing breath, I am reborn
And so creates another day,
As the mists give way to pinks and reds of dawn.
They turn to golden of the sun
That warms us all,
New life's begun,
The energies we then extract so that all life can be exact.
I began as a tiny seed moulded by the Creators hand,
Fought onward and upward from the place of my birth

*Struggled from my mother earth, with tiny sapling hands,
Growing ever so slowly every day.
The trials of life have taken their toll
My trunk is gnarled and very old,
But with every lesson I have learned,
Direction came – untold – unspurned.
I am my Creator and he is me
Let us all live in perfect harmony.
Come to me my little ones, I'll protect you from the heated sun.
Lean upon my gnarled old trunk and feel how cool I am
Embrace me in your heart and soul for we can be as one.
My roots are solid in the ground,
I hold back the waters of the streams,
So my smaller brothers can also gleam
– the mosses, ferns and smaller things.
The stream then babbles happily past,
Quite contented in repast.
Flowing on her merry way,
Sharing freely with us all every day.*

WHAT IS JUSTICE? EXHIBITION

In September this year, 44 art boxes created by Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants were on display at City Hall. Over the duration, thousands of visitors viewed the exhibition.

Around 120 people attended the Opening Reception on September 12th which included a preview of “Forgotten No More” by The FAN Theatre Group. This performance highlighted the significant milestones along the Forgotten Australian journey since the tabling of the Forde Inquiry in 1999.

Congratulations to all the people involved. It was a powerful and thought provoking exhibition that brought many people to tears when they took a closer look. As part of the exhibition people attending were invited to decorate a leaf with their response to the question ‘What is Justice?’ and add their leaf to the tree. Many visitors did just that and over the duration of the exhibition the tree sprouted more and more leaves.

Earlier in the year the question “What is Justice?” had been put to Karyn Walsh at a Royal Commission Public Hearing. Following this, the Lotus Place Reference Group had discussions about this question and how they and other Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants could contribute to this important conversation. It was here the idea for an exhibition came about. Being 5 years since the National Apology, 15 years since the Forde Inquiry and 2 years into the Royal Commission, makes it a perfect opportunity to reflect on this question. An issue that is never far from the minds of Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. Responding to this question ‘What is Justice?’ and creating their art box, for many, was a huge undertaking. A process that involved reflecting and drawing on often very painful memories, taking some time and care to



decide what to include and how to convey their message. Lotus Place held creative workshops during August to support participants in responding to a theme which is particularly confronting for survivors who have experienced a lack of justice for the trauma, neglect and abuse inflicted upon them in their early years and the resulting effects of these circumstances. Each box gives a glimpse into a person's experience with their struggle, pain, injustice, courage and great inner strength.

It was appropriate being part of the Art From The Margins show, bringing people from the margins into City Hall with such a tribute to people's creativity despite their adversity in life.

This exhibition is a conversation about justice. It is very personal yet an issue at the heart of our society and not simply about civil or criminal justice. It does not stop here, it is an ongoing conversation that will take many forms: creative, formal, online, and hopefully become a more national conversation.

The “What is Justice?” Exhibition is currently on display at lotus place until mid-January 2015.

Artists

Allan A, B S, Bryan H, Chris B, Colleen S, Danuta S, Debra C, Dee S, Denise P, Dennis D, Diane C, Diane T, Donna S, Eric H, Frank M, Gavan L, Gloria L, Greg L, Hank L, Hanna W, Janette T, Jessie M, Juanita B, Karen H, Karen C, Kathleen B, Katrina W, Kelly B, Kevin D, Lana S, Leonie W, Malcolm V, Margaret M, Margaret H, Marlene W, Mary A, Michael C, Michele U, Noel H, Olga A, Peter C, Robert T, Ruby S, Sherie H, T Collins, Terrenca B, Theresa W and others who wish to remain anonymous.



LOTUS PLACE - Reunions

This year the idea arose to provide an opportunity for former residents of homes that either do not have reunions, or who do not have regular reunions, to catch up over a light lunch. These have been held at Lotus Place in South Brisbane. These events are a good way for people who do not wish to revisit the site of the old home which is where most reunions are often held, to share stories with other old boys or old girls.

Reunions that have taken place at Lotus Place this year have included W.R. Black, Westbrook and Nazareth House. It is hoped that these get together can grow from year to year. Staff at Lotus Place have not kept lists of who spent time at which homes so sending personal invitations has been difficult to do. If you would like to receive an invitation should a particular home that you were in have a reunion please contact Lotus Place. Otherwise keep an eye out in the Lily Pad for reunion dates for 2015.

The last quarter of each year seems to be the time for on-site reunions. The annual Enoggera and Riverview reunions were held in August. The St Vincent's Home Nudgee reunion has been held every two years in recent times and it was time again for people to gather at Nudgee in November.

The Nudgee reunion happened to be held on one of the hottest days of the year. Cold drinks and the breeze on the veranda's kept everyone cool. Everyone pitched in on the day and there were former residents who had spent time there from each decade between the 1930's to the 1970's.

The Riverview reunion keeps getting stronger thanks to Bob and his team. The old boys (who are the most important guests), heard from a list of speakers, were treated to musical entertainment, enjoyed some food and shared stories.



Riverview Reunion

The Enoggera Reunion was hosted at Hillbrook Anglican College and as per usual there was a BBQ put on and food cooked by the current headmaster, Geoff Newton. The old boys reminisced about times gone by and had a great catch up with each other. Geoff had plans for the latest renovations available for all to see and after lunch, those who were interested were shown some of the newest building, including being given a great tour through the Auditorium. Geoff and those in tow then walked down to the old creek and around the perimeter of the grounds. Many memories about the creek were shared.



Nudgee Reunion



Tuffnel Reunion at Lotus Place

SNAP SHOT OF LOTUS EVENTS



This year Remembrance Day was also held at the Gold Coast



MOONLIGHT MAGIC DINNER DANCE

Lotus Place gave the speech at the Moonlight Magic Dinner Dance this year. Marlene addressed an audience of over 800.

NATIONAL APOLOGY 5th ANNIVERSARY

Pearl, Leneen Forde & Michelle at the Art Workshop & Afternoon tea, Dennis below



Christine, Frank, Pete & Ken at the Songs of Justice Concert



LOTUS PLACE - GOLD COAST

Fondly referred to by Maryla as “The Gold Coast Mob”, the Gold Coast peer lunch and support group has been running on a weekly basis from the Southport Community Centre since June 2014. Over this six month period the group has grown in number and continues to evolve into an increasingly supportive and cohesive collective of people.

For those who aren't aware, Maryla also delivers an outreach service (planned support) to people living on the Gold Coast on a one-on-one basis on Fridays.

Since commencing a more formal and planned presence on the Gold Coast, a total of seven new people who had previously never been aware of our program have made contact with us and have accessed a variety of services including attending the peer lunch, accessing Royal Commission support and/or planned support. Two of these participants were referred through via peers already attending the group.

Generally the day starts out by setting up the room, some people come early to help with the tables and chairs. More people slowly start to drift in, make a cuppa, find a chair at the table and start to catch up with those now there. Questions get asked like, “who is not here today are they ok?” and “I haven't seen such and such for a while, have you heard from them?” We have had couple of our mob in hospital of late – Karen and Roy - and both have managed to get themselves back to the group surprisingly quickly. We wish you both a speedy recovery.

Some weeks we have had some donations of clothing and household items as well as clothing swaps. On other occasions we have had guest speakers. Initially coming as a guest speaker as part of the Lotus Place Royal Commission Support Team from Brisbane, Sean has become quite a popular visitor when he makes it to the Coast. Other City Folk, Katie and Nisha facilitated the “What is Justice Workshop” and some amazing piece of art were created. Thanks to Sandra, Australian Hearing came and gave a presentation to the group and then provided free hearing checks to those who were interested. Peter has recently become the new proud owner of a modern hearing aid and now doesn't miss a thing!

Lunch starts getting prepared by some kitchen fairies around 11.15am and usually by 12pm, we all sit together and eat and chat more, lots more. If able to fit it in to his busy schedule, Eric (a long term advocate for services on the Coast) pops in to check on us all. On



occasion Tony will provide feedback from the Reference Group that he attends in Brisbane. After lunch, the cleaning fairies vanish off into the kitchen and work their magic – with lots of laughter and being a true example of “many hands making light work”.

Significant events that have been conducted over this time include the Remembrance Day event where just over 50 people attended. Tony did such a great job as MC that people asked if this was his “day job”. Marcia read out the Welcome to Country and did herself proud. We were privileged to have Dr Adele Chenoweth as our guest speaker and she captivated the audience with her presentation. Karen enchanted all by reciting her “Tree of Life Poem” and the Statements read out by Pam, Marcia, Theresa, Terrenca, Sean and Bobby were all so obviously heartfelt and delivered with such conviction.

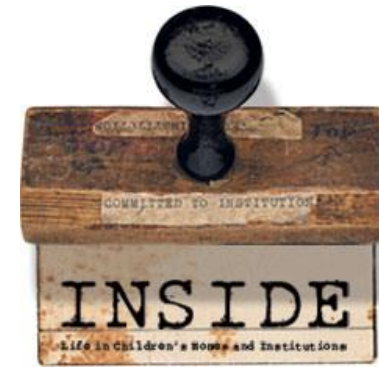
Now we had one successful event under our belt, The 5th Anniversary of the National Apology felt like a breeze. We kept it rather “low key” and celebrated it with music, art and personal symbols, reflecting on what the apology meant to each person and celebrating what they are grateful for in their lives now.

In the coming year we are looking forward to having new people come and join us and help to continue to develop the group. Everyone that attends understands how difficult it can be to walk in those doors for the very first time. Each person who attends has had the same experience as part of their journey. For those of you who are thinking of attending for the first time, know, that we all strive for and have the best intentions of creating and maintaining a safe space that is non-judgemental and that provides a supportive environment for all who attend.

The peer group will recommence next year on Tuesday 20 January in the same venue - Southport Community Centre, Conference Room (First Floor).

See you in 2015!

INSIDE: Life in Children's Homes & Institutions



This exhibition that was on at Queensland Museum South Bank from the 9th of August to the 14th of November 2014. During this time thousands of visitors from across the globe saw the exhibition. Many of the people were moved to leave heartfelt comments about what they saw and how they felt about it. Some of these cards have been on display at Lotus Place since 19th November. Here are a small selection.



'What is Justice?' Exhibition
Box by Olga



NEW YEARS EVE

On 31st December Lotus Place will be open at 7am to midday instead of our usual hours for a 10am New Year's Eve party.



LOTUS PLACE PROGRAM CONSULTATION DAY

As part of our annual program planning Lotus Place is holding a Program Consultation day on Tuesday 13th January, 2015. Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants in Brisbane area are invited to come along and contribute their ideas. Please RSVP by 9th if you are attending. Please note that Lotus Place will not be opened on Monday 12th and Wednesday 14th due to all Lotus Place staff being involved in annual program planning on these days. On Tuesday we will be open for the program consultation and our usual peer lunch will not be on that day. The centre will be open as per usual from Thursday 15th.