



Townsville Centre Open Hours and Service Structure

Call 9am –5pm Monday to Friday for support and referral over the phone

Monday - Thursday drop in 10am to 2pm

Friday - Appointment only



Upcoming Events



www.lotusplace.org.au • North Queensland • April 2017

Welcome to this month's edition of the Lillypad

Please feel free to call us on 07 4724 4410

The Lotus Place NQ office is located at
312 Sturt Street in Townsville City.

lotusplacenq@micahprojects.org.au
PO Box 2027, Townsville, QLD, 4810

Cyclone Debbie

The Queensland Government is committed to providing both immediate and ongoing support to those who have been directly affected by Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said.

The Whitsunday and Mackay local government areas are the first cyclone-affected communities to receive disaster relief assistance under joint Federal and State funded Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

As further damage assessment are made across affected communities in North Queensland, residents outside of these areas may also be eligible for disaster funding relief.

"The immediate focus is on the safety of Queenslanders as Debbie crosses the coast and its immediate aftermath, but we have already moved to put measures in place to make assistance available for affected families and households," the Premier said.

"As part of our preparations, Immediate Hardship Assistance and support services are ready for residents directly affected by Tropical Cyclone Debbie."

The Premier said a Community Recovery Hotline - **1800 173 349** – is live for information or to arrange any assistance affected residents might require.

For the first time, applications for financial assistance will be able to be made online through the www.communityrecovery.qld.gov.au and eligible residents can have payments transferred directly to their bank accounts. For those families without access to the internet or phone, we have also pre-deployed 30,000 debit cards to the region with another 15,000 in reserve and another 50,000 due end of the week.

The Premier delivered an additional 2000 debit cards to Bowen during her visit to the cyclone-affected community today.

Immediate Hardship Assistance will be available to people who:

- Live or are stranded in the targeted activation zone
- Are unable to meet immediate essential needs
- Are unable to seek support from family or friends and
- Demonstrate direct impact such as loss or damage to home, loss of essential personal items and/or isolation from home for more than 48 hours.

Subject to these criteria, applicants may receive \$180 per person up to \$900 for a family of five or more. Other assistance may also be available.

People who are experiencing personal hardship should contact the Community Recovery Hotline of **1800 173 349**, or go to www.communityrecovery.qld.gov.au for further information.



Managing Stress after a Disaster!

Managing stress after a disaster

After a disaster you'll use a lot of emotional energy coping with your fears, frustrations and other feelings.

This is when normal stress symptoms may begin to show and can affect your mind, body, feelings and relationships.

Psychological

- trouble thinking clearly, planning or making decisions
- low attention span or difficulty concentrating or remembering details
- continually thinking about the problem or other difficult times
- not speaking clearly, slurring words or forgetting names.

Physical

- tension, stress or tightness in muscles
- weakness, tiredness and a loss of energy or enthusiasm
- headaches, trembling, sweating, nausea, aches or pains
- lack of appetite or an increased desire for stimulants, sugar, alcohol, tobacco or coffee
- feeling tired but unable to sleep, or having disturbed sleep, dreams or nightmares.

Emotional

- detached and don't care about things any more
- irritable, bad tempered, impatient or restless
- overwhelmed and everything seems too difficult
- tearful for no reason
- easily upset or oversensitive to what others do and say
- insecure or wanting to stay in familiar places
- feeling sad and hopeless as though the emergency will never end
- very emotional and experiencing reasonable waves of anger or worry.

Relationships

- blame others for the stress
- tend to blow things out of proportion
- can't feel happiness, enjoyment or affection for loved ones
- changed relationships with those close to you
- no longer want to be with family or friends or always need them around
- need to always talk about the emergency

These reactions are normal after a traumatic event. But if they continue, it can turn into a stress cycle and eventually a lifestyle. You need to break the cycle to overcome stress.

Break the stress cycle

Step 1: Recognise you are stressed

People don't often recognise they are stressed because they are too focused on the problems. Listen to others who may see you more clearly than you see yourself.

Step 2: Recognise your stress cycle

If stress has been ongoing, a pattern of stress may form. This is called a stress cycle and may become a lifestyle.

Step 3: Decide to break your pattern of stress

Although there are lots of things about the stress in your life that you cannot change, there may be some that you can.

Step 4: Reduce stressful activities

Check your lifestyle and routines to see where you can reduce the stress. Try to stop doing things that keep stress high.

Step 5: Increase relaxation and positive activities

Build activities into your day that are rewarding and give you a good feeling. Take time to enjoy yourself.



Royal commission into sexual abuse: Issue of redress must be a priority, commissioner says.....

The commissioner said some survivors would be disappointed that the institution they were abused in was not part of the public inquiry, and that it was impossible for the commission to examine every allegation.

"It may be that criminal proceedings are underway and that a public hearing by the commission would prejudice a fair trial," he said.

"It may also be that the documentary trail is inadequate to enable us to ascertain the institution's response to the problems."

Justice McClellan said extensive resources was required for each of the 57 case studies, and the commission compulsorily acquired 1.2 million documents which then had to be analysed.

But that is cold comfort for one woman, whose son was abused at a boarding school in Bathurst, in the central-west of New South Wales.

Carole Nielsen said she would not give up on the fight to have a public hearing into child sexual abuse at St Stanislaus, which has been at the centre of shocking allegations.

"I can understand that it has been a huge task but as the mother of a survivor who was sexually abused at Bathurst I'm extremely disappointed and I am very concerned," Ms Nielsen said.

"We're not going to stop campaigning to have this examined. We're not going to give up.

"We had to fight to get the school exposed and we're going to fight to get it before the royal commission."

Justice McClellan said the commission strived to give the public "an understanding of how institutions failed. I believe this has been achieved".

The commission's final report, which will include "comprehensive recommendations designed to better protect children" will be delivered to the Governor-General on December 15.





Royal commission into sexual abuse: Issue of redress must be a priority, commissioner says....

Victims have waited too long for a response to their suffering and protection of children should be a top priority in Australia, says the chair of the royal commission into child sexual abuse.

After three-and-a-half years with sessions in every capital city, the final public hearing has begun in Sydney.

Chair of the commission, Justice Peter McClellan, said it was remarkable there were failures at more than 4,000 institutions identified in abuse allegations.

He said more than 1,200 witnesses gave evidence about abuse that occurred at "public and private schools, detention centres, out-of-home care, churches, orphanages and government bodies".

"We have also inquired into defence establishments, sporting clubs, after-school care, dance and performing arts academies, institutions providing services for children with disability, scouts, healthcare providers and a yoga ashram."

Justice McClellan said the commission would continue to hear evidence from another 2,000 people in private sessions which would conclude in December.

But after 400 days of public hearings, he urged governments and institutions to tackle the issue of redress.

"Survivors have waited too long for an effective response to their suffering," he said.

"And the future protection of Australian children must now be given the highest priority."

Earlier the commission reported that redress could include an apology, counselling and monetary compensation.

"I am extremely disappointed and concerned"

Justice McClellan said the commission's research into how children came to be abused was unprecedented in its scale and its final report would include recommendations to ensure, as much as possible, that no child is abused in an Australian institution.....



Lotus Place welcomes our new Staff and Student



Jenny is a 3rd year Social Work Student from James Cook University and is with us until June. Jenny is helping us collect your stories and produce them into a book as well as designing Institution Booklets.

Jenny comes from Rockhampton and is our official Fish Tank cleaner.

Jess is our Administration and Support Worker employed part-time. You will probably hear her cheery voice when you call our office. Jess comes from Victoria and is slowly learning Northern Queensland lingo.

Jess has a background in Speech Pathology





Personal Story

Dear Lotus Place,

On Friday I received 196 pages of documents you so kindly printed out for me. Thank you. Sadly, the Department had twice this many documents (393 of them) and have chosen not to share the rest with me. Also, all but 23 pages they did send are heavily censored, some to the point of being incomprehensible.

I'm not going to give a précis of all the docs but I would like to mention a couple of interesting things I learned from them and how they fit in with my memories. There are things I was too young to remember or I just didn't know.

I remember my father kidnapping me and my three younger siblings from our mother in 1961. I was just 6 years old. According to the documents, some of which I remember, we were dumped on a family (who seem to have lived on the Stuart Prison Reserve) for a set period of time, possibly a month. When my father never returned, we were given up to the Townsville Receiving Depot (I hate the name as it sounds like somewhere you would drop off a sack of spuds) and a Police inquiry as to his whereabouts was undertaken. When he still hadn't turned up, the Depot started to get antsy about having us and began making inquiries about sending us to St Joseph's Orphanage in Rockhampton. Fortunately he returned to 'claim' us (again with the sack of spuds, this time a lost sack). Here's the kicker though, the Mother Superior of St Joseph's let it be known that one or more of us (exactly who was censored) were in St Joseph's for 7 to 8 weeks three years earlier. This was around the time the second youngest of us was born in Mt Isa. I hope to be able to locate any records so see if this was true.

I don't know where we went after being 'claimed', but I do remember ending up on a farm outside of Tully and being found by my beloved mother and taken home.

I have flashes of memories of the 6 months or so we were on the run. I remember my father tricked my mother into believing he was taking us to the movies while she was at work. I remember his friend, and a local Catholic priest helped him bundle us onto a train out of town. I remember my darling great grandfather standing under the fig tree outside of the Townsville Railway Station and saying 'hello' to my father. He must have been trying to talk my father into taking us back. I remember my sister riding a horse while we staying with the family but I was too scared to. As for the Catholic school they sent us two older ones to, I remember thinking the nun teaching me was rather stupid as we had to write a letter to God - what new thing can you say to someone who knows all your thoughts? I remember the other school in Townsville, Central State, and the daily humiliation I was subjected to for being an orphan kid without a hankie.

Stupidly, my father overlooked the fact that my mother's family were North Queenslanders and that we had relatives everywhere. One such relative was a young School teacher who one day discovered me crying in the playground with my sister trying to console me. When she learned of my tale of woe regarding the humiliation and the hankies, she organised for me to have one of hers each day thereafter, which I then returned at the end of the day. I assume she let Mum know we were at the Receiving Depot.



GranmaMimi.

The other things I remember is that there was some kind of cell for errant children at the Depot and a boy who was kind being locked up in it. He was released and able to say goodbye as we were walking down the very long driveway when we were leaving. My next memories are of being dumped on the lovely couple at the farm. (That was the way my father operated. He would dump us and leave till he claimed us again.) I can't remember if they had children as I was pretty much wrapped up in my own misery. I remember they had at least one cow and we got to drink beautiful fresh milk but I was too scared to milk it. My sister wasn't though. Nor did she hide in our bedroom from the fireworks on Guy Fawkes night like I did, terrified of the smoke and noise, particularly the Catherine wheel. Sadly I have no memories of my younger two siblings during this time, only my sister next in line. Mum and my uncle found us the very next day and took us home.

My father was later to have his autobiography published. He never mentioned kidnapping us. In the story of his life, me and my siblings rated 2 or 3 lines between us. He's dead now and I never went to his funeral. Strangely, he was on the stage for a couple of years, and the people he performed with have recently contacted me and have adopted me as one of their own. Last night I was invited to their world wide reunion in London, but sadly I can't go due to severe financial restraints. I am proud of his success on stage but I have no feelings for him, apart from sadness at what he chose to miss out on - me and my siblings, his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Now he has great, great grandchildren who will never know him. I got over my hate/love ambivalence for him a long time ago. He wasn't worth the pain.

Sadly, repercussions from the kidnapping affected my life for the next 30 years. Apart from the trauma we experienced, I was badly affected scholastically. I was in Grade Two with my sister in Grade One. Every school we ended up at the curriculum was different for me so when I returned to the Isa right on exam time, I had no knowledge of the work they had covered while I was away. I therefore failed and was kept down the following year. My sister either never had exams or the school work was pretty much the same and she moved up putting us together in the same grade. This wasn't an issue as, due to being less than a year apart in ages, the teachers thought we were twins. That is until they found out differently and then they treated me like I was intellectually disabled. This dogged me right through primary school and by the time I got to high school I had started to believe it. Fortunately, I didn't fully believe it and, with encouragement from friends, I completed a university degree in my early 40's.

We mostly lived with our mother for the next 5 1/2 years until she died in August 1967. We then became Wards of the State again and were fostered by my maternal grandmother. But that is another story.

Cheers,

GranmaMimi.