



www.lotusplace.org.au • Central Queensland • December 2017

*Lotus Place is a dedicated support service and resource centre for adults who as children lived in out-of-home care and adults who experienced sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse in out-of-home care or religious or institutional settings.*

*Micah projects supports people who have experienced abuse to seek acknowledgement and redress by Churches, Governments and Community Organisations who failed in their duty of care.*

This is our last edition for 2017, and as we prepare for Christmas, I would like to reflect on the past 12 months.

Of particular note is that The Royal Commission into Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is coming to an end in December. The Royal Commission will be holding its final hearing on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to mark the end of the 5 year-long inquiry. This final sitting is a chance for the Commissioners to thank the community for their support of the Royal Commission and its work.

We know that this Royal Commission has been significant in the lives of many of you and over the past 5 years the Royal Commission has held 57 public hearings, where they heard the evidence of more than 1,300 witnesses. Commissioners have also listened to the personal accounts of almost 8,000 survivors of child sexual abuse in institutions through 'private sessions'. The final sitting will be televised live from 8:30am and will conclude by 9am. The sitting can be viewed from the Royal Commission's website should you choose to watch it, [https://](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/)

[www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/)

A regular group has begun to meet in Bundaberg once a month at Take the Plunge Café, I have personally enjoyed getting to know those of you who reside in the south of our CQ region. Rockhampton continues to meet weekly for either morning tea or lunches. Chair yoga and meditation group met earlier in the year and many other opportunities were created for connection and sharing. Remembrance Day and Anniversary of the National Apology events were recognised and acknowledged in both Rockhampton and Bundaberg, an outreach morning tea was held at the site of the old St Georges Home at Parkhurst as well as recognising Blue Knot Day. Throughout the year, there have been many opportunities to connect with some of you individually through record searching, family tracing and linking into other resources.

Enjoy the read, Merry Christmas, take care of yourselves and see you in the New Year!

Regards, *Selena*



### *Christmas Holidays*

*Selena and Leigh from Lotus Place CQ are both taking holidays over the Christmas period. Which means our CQ office will be unattended.*

*The team in Brisbane will be operating and available through the Christmas/New Year period. You can contact them at any time on 07 3347 8500 or 1 800 035 588.*

Lotus Place CQ holidays are from **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017**

We look forward to being back at work on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018**



## Be good to yourself over Christmas and New Year

Christmas can be a fun and enjoyable time for some people, with opportunities for spending time with family and friends, but for many people it can be a stressful or lonely time. Sometimes the build-up for Christmas day can be a source of anxiety, and feelings of isolation, loneliness and loss increase. If this is the case, it can be useful to think about how you will manage during this time of year. So here are some tips to consider:



- Limit alcohol, as alcohol can sometimes fuel arguments and increase distress.
- Be mindful of not overeating - looking after your body can help your mental health too.
- Listen to your emotions, maybe a walk or quiet time might help.
- Be gentle with yourself, lots of people struggle at this time of year.
- Reach out to people and/ or services if you need too.
- Lotus Place can be contacted on 3347 8500 or 1800 035 588 during business hours or Lifeline 13 11 14 are a couple of options.

### Free Community Christmas Lunches Rockhampton and Bundaberg

#### Rockhampton

**Where:** St Josephs Cathedral Corso, Corner William and West Streets, Rockhampton.

**When:** Monday 25 December at 11.00am - 2.00pm

**RSVP:** Linda 0407 831 975

#### Bundaberg

**Where:** Church of Christ Youth Hall Bundaberg, Corner Twyford Street and Dittmann Road, Avoca

**When:** Monday 25 December at 12.00 noon

**RSVP:** Peter 4155 1619 or 0427 798 029 or email [info@bundabergcofc.com](mailto:info@bundabergcofc.com)

### John's Corner

Merry Christmas to all my brothers and sisters, Selena and Leigh at Lotus Place and my dear friend, Frank, at Gin Gin.

Love you all,

From John



- Q. What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?
- A. A rebel without a Claus.

### Bundaberg Morning Tea 2018

There will be no morning tea at Take the Plunge in December, instead our Christmas event will be at The Spotted Dog on Thursday 14 December at 11.30am (see events page of this newsletter).

Take the Plunge are moving, so our first meeting for 2018 will be held at their new location of 7 Quinn Street, Bundaberg.

If you require transport on the day, please call Lotus Place CQ on 4927 7604 to arrange. See you there!





## Hat Making for November Luncheon (Melbourne Cup Day)



...and the winner is.... Margaret !! (below)



## The Bard

With Paula from Bundaberg.

I was a little lost for something to do when my mum passed away a few years ago and went to a markets where there was a drumming group. I didn't know if I would enjoy it, but I joined and it has been truly worthwhile. I would highly recommend it to others. It is open to all ages, at various times and places, this year there was full moon drumming at Bargara Beach in August.



For more information on Unity Drumming, please contact Cynthia on 0431 933 817  
 Facebook: Unity Drummers Bundaberg  
 or email: [cynthiahighstreet@hotmail.com](mailto:cynthiahighstreet@hotmail.com)



## Forgotten Australian Wallet Cards

## CARD 1

## Front



Please listen to me

Believe me

Recognise me

Do not judge me

[Trauma changes people](#)



HISTORICAL ABUSE NETWORK

## Back

I am a **Forgotten Australian**

A survivor of Australia's past child welfare system. The reality of my childhood was one of:

- depravity
- neglect
- physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- denial of basic human rights.

Childhood trauma drastically changes development and it may effect the way I am relating to you right now.

Please consider my past when you engage in the present.

Initiative of the HAN Reference Group NQ

## CARD 2

## Front

**Attention!**

lotusplace.org.au

Health professionals

Community service providers

Emergency services

Support persons

Law enforcement

[Please read this card](#)



HISTORICAL ABUSE NETWORK

## Back

I am a **Survivor**

...of Australia's past child welfare system. The reality of my and my peers' experience was often one of:

- depravity
- neglect
- physical, emotional and sexual abuse
- denial of basic human rights.

Childhood trauma drastically changes a person's development and the way they will relate to other people and situations for the rest of their life.

Initiative of the HAN Reference Group NQ

## CARD 3

## Front



Please listen to me

Believe me

Hear me

Do not judge me

I may be **confused**

I may feel **threatened**

[Trauma changes people](#)



HISTORICAL ABUSE NETWORK

## Back

I am a **Survivor**

One of 500,000 others who spent part of their childhood in institutional/out-of-home care.

Often the reality of our childhood was one of brutality, neglect and physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

I carry the trauma of my childhood through many parts of my life. It *doesn't* define me but it can change my ability to respond rationally to stressful situations.

[Trauma changes people](#)

Initiative of the HAN Reference Group NQ

The above cards will fit in your wallet or purse and were handed out at Apology Day events at Rockhampton and Bundaberg. They are useful if you want to give a service provider information about Forgotten Australians or about what would help you. They were developed by the North Qld Reference Group and are available for you should you want a couple.

You are able to pick up out two (2) cards, please ring Lotus Place CQ on phone 4927 7604 and indicate which two you would like.





## Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

### Final sitting marks the end of the Royal Commission

14 November 2017

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will sit on December 14 to publicly mark the conclusion of the five-year long inquiry.

Royal Commission CEO, Philip Reed, said the sitting will be a chance for Commissioners to thank the community for their continued support of the Royal Commission and its work.

“When we began in 2013, we had no idea just how widespread or prevalent child sexual abuse in institutions was in Australia, or how many people would come forward to share their story,” Mr Reed said.

“Since then we have held 57 public hearings, where we sat for 444 days and heard evidence of more than 1,300 witnesses. Commissioners have also listened to the personal accounts of almost 8,000 survivors of child sexual abuse in institutions through ‘private sessions’.

“Combined with our comprehensive policy and research program, the Royal Commission has been able to contribute to the community’s understanding and awareness of institutional child sexual abuse.”

Mr Reed said that during the life of the Royal Commission, thousands of individuals, including survivors, academics, legal practitioners, government representatives and advocacy and support groups have contributed to its work.

“We couldn’t have achieved what we have so far without the input and support of so many,” Mr Reed said.

The Hon. Justice Peter McClellan AM, the Chair of the Royal Commission, will present the National Library of Australia with a book of around one thousand messages written by survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

The book titled, ‘Message to Australia’ is a collation of personal messages written by those who shared their story to the Royal Commission in a private session. The messages, addressed to the Australian community, tell of survivors’ experiences and their hopes for creating a safer environment for children in the future. Once handed to the National Library, the book will be accessible to members of the public.

This sitting will be open to the public, with limited seating available.

For those who are unable to attend, the sitting will be streamed live to the public via webcast on the Royal Commission’s website [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

The Royal Commission’s final report will be delivered to the Governor General on Friday 15 December 2017.

**Event:** Royal Commission Final Sitting

**Date:** Thursday 14 December

**Sitting times:** 9:30am AEDT (the sitting is expected to conclude by 10:00am AEDT)

**Location:** Hearing Room 1, Level 17, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney.





## Rockhampton

### Morning Tea

10.00am-11.00am

### Lotus Place

Every Tuesday except  
when lunch is  
served

### CQ Community Legal Centre visit to Lotus Place

10am Wed 13 Dec  
phone 4927 7604  
for appointment

### Centrelink visit to Lotus Place

10am Wed 6 Dec 17  
phone 4927 7604  
for appointment

### Christmas Lunch

11.30am Tues 19 Dec  
Kalka Palms Hotel  
187 Lakes Creek Road,  
Nth Rockhampton  
RSVP Tues 12 Dec  
phone: 4927 7604

## Bundaberg

### Take the Plunge are moving!

First meeting for 2018  
January 18 will be held at their  
new location

**7 Quinn St, Bundaberg**

--ooOoo--

### Bundaberg Morning Tea

10.30am Thurs 18 Jan 2018

### Take the Plunge

**7 Quinn Street, Bundaberg**

### Christmas Lunch

11.30am Thurs 14 Dec  
Canefire Room  
The Spotted Dog  
217 Bourbong Street, Bundaberg  
RSVP Thurs 7 Dec  
phone: 4927 7604