



*“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars.”—
Kahlil Gibran*



The lotus flower has its origins and roots in the muddy waters below the surface, yet above the water it is a beautiful resilient flower. After a consultative process the Lotus Flower was chosen as both a metaphor and image to represent the journey from adversity to hope.



The Lotus Place NQ office is located at 312 Sturt Street in Townsville City. We provide outreach to Mackay, the Burdekin and Cairns

www.lotusplace.org.au • North Queensland • February 2018

Lotus Place focuses on helping each person to fulfil their potential, and to access justice and healing from the effects of childhood abuse.

Lotus Place provides integrated peer support, advocacy, counselling and other support services to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants.

Christmas 2017



What you need to know about the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse

After 57 public hearings spanning five years, 1,300 witness accounts and more than 8,000 harrowing personal stories from survivors, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is over.

There were 409 recommendations out of the final report with 189 that we haven't heard in earlier royal commission releases.

Some major recommendations are:

- The ministry of churches (not just the Catholic church) should not be exempt from reporting information discovered in religious confession
- The Australian Catholic Church should request permission from the Vatican to introduce voluntary celibacy for diocesan clergy
- State and territory governments should introduce legislation to create a criminal offence of failure to protect a child from risk of abuse within an institution
- A national strategy to prevent child abuse
- Candidates for religious ministry should undergo external psychological testing, including psycho-sexual assessment, for the purposes of determining their suitability to be a person in religious ministry and to undertake work involving children
- Each religious organisation should consider establishing a national register which records information to assist affiliated institutions identify and respond to any risks to children that may be posed by people in religious or pastoral ministry
- Any person in religious ministry who is the subject of a complaint of child sexual abuse which is substantiated ... or who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, should be permanently removed from ministry

Are there activities that you would like to see happen at Lotus Place?

Do you have skills you can share with others?

What would you like to be involved with?

How about contributing a piece to our newsletter?

Your feedback is welcomed!

Phone us on (07) 4724 4410

Email us at lotusnq@micahprojects.org.au



How might loved ones react?

Partners, friends, or family members may feel hurt, cut off, or down because the survivor has not been able to get over the trauma. Loved ones may become angry or distant toward the survivor. They may feel pressured, tense, and controlled. The survivor's symptoms can make a loved one feel like he or she is living in a war zone or in constant threat of danger. Living with someone who has PTSD can sometimes lead the partner to have some of the same feelings of having been through trauma.

In sum, a person who goes through a trauma may have certain common reactions. These reactions affect the people around the survivor. Family, friends, and others then react to how the survivor is behaving. This in turn comes back to affect the person who went through the trauma.

Trauma types and relationships

Certain types of "man-made" traumas can have a more severe effect on relationships. These traumas include:

- Childhood sexual and physical abuse Rape Domestic violence Combat
- Terrorism Genocide Torture Kidnapping Prisoner of war

Survivors of man-made traumas often feel a lasting sense of terror, horror, endangerment, and betrayal. These feelings affect how they relate to others. They may feel like they are letting down their guard if they get close to someone else and trust them. This is not to say a survivor never feels a strong bond of love or friendship. However, a close relationship can also feel scary or dangerous to a trauma survivor.

Do all trauma survivors have relationship problems?

Many trauma survivors do not develop PTSD. Also, many people with PTSD do not have relationship problems. People with PTSD can create and maintain good relationships by:

- Building a personal support network to help cope with PTSD while working on family and friend relationships
- Sharing feelings honestly and openly, with respect and compassion
- Building skills at problem solving and connecting with others
- Including ways to play, be creative, relax, and enjoy others

What can be done to help someone who has PTSD?

Relations with others are very important for trauma survivors. Social support is one of the best things to protect against getting PTSD. Relationships can offset feelings of being alone. Relationships may also help the survivor's self-esteem. This may help reduce depression and guilt. A relationship can also give the survivor a way to help someone else. Helping others can reduce feelings of failure or feeling cut off from others. Lastly, relationships are a source of support when coping with stress.

Commonwealth Redress Scheme**An update for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse written by Lisa Flynn, National Special Counsel – Abuse Law, Shine Lawyers**

Recently, further information has been released in relation to the proposed National Redress Scheme for survivors of child sexual abuse suffered within institutions.

Whilst the Federal Government is to be congratulated on its willingness to implement a National Scheme to provide redress and assistance to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Australia, there remain some issues with the scheme, largely because State governments and institutions have, to date been reluctant to opt in to this vital structure.

Entitlement to the Scheme

To be entitled to access the scheme, a person has to have suffered sexual abuse when the person was a child (under the age of 18) either inside or outside of Australia and the abuse must have occurred before the scheme's start day of 1 July 2018.

·Sexual abuse is defined as any act which exposes a person to, or involves a person in, sexual processes beyond the person's understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

·Non sexual abuse will be compensated if it related to the sexual abuse. Non sexual abuse is related if the institution is responsible for both the sexual abuse and the non-sexual abuse.

What a person may be entitled to under the Commonwealth Redress Scheme

Redress will consist of payments of up to \$150,000.00. In addition, counselling and direct engagement will be provided if the survivor requires this.

Counselling will be available after an offer is accepted and for the life of the scheme, which initially will be ten years.

How the amount of redress will be calculated

The amount that a person will be awarded under the redress scheme will be calculated by an assessment matrix which takes in-to account relevant factors including (but not limited to):

- The severity of the abuse
- The impact of the abuse
- Relevant circumstances in relation to the abuse

Standard of proof required for access to the Commonwealth Redress Scheme

Applicants will need to prove that there was a “reasonable likelihood” that the abuse occurred and this is defined as “the chance of an event occurring or not occurring which is real - not fanciful or remote”.

How a claim is made

A claim must be in a prescribed form and include all relevant information and the information must be verified by a statutory declaration.

Impact on other payments

Compensation will be tax free and will not affect payments under the Social Security Act and Veterans Entitlements Act and will be quarantined from any bankruptcy proceedings and will be protected from garnishee orders. Because the payment will not be defined as compensation or damages there will be no requirement to repay any benefits under form any Commonwealth or state scheme including Medicare repayments.

What if someone has been awarded compensation or redress prior to the introduction of the Scheme?

“Top ups” will be available but the amount already received will be adjusted upward for today’s values. This means that survivors who have already received a payment of \$150,000 or more will not be eligible for a further monetary payment but may still access counselling and direct personal response from the institution through the redress scheme.

Current Main Issues With The Proposed Commonwealth Redress Scheme

The maximum amount available is less than the amount recommended by the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission recommended that the maximum redress amount be \$200,000.00 with average payments of \$65,000.00. The Commonwealth announced schemes caps redress at \$150,000.00 with average amounts expected at less than \$65,000.00

Those excluded from the Scheme

The Minister has announced that survivors who have been convicted of sex crimes or serious crimes which have attracted jail terms of 5 years or more will not be eligible to apply under the scheme. This prohibition is not in the legislation and will likely be covered by the Rules. This is a contentious element of the Redress scheme, given that there can be a connection between some survivors offending and the abuse that they have suffered and that these people have already been punished for their crimes and should not be punished twice.

Relationships and PTSD

How does trauma affect relationships?

Trauma survivors with PTSD may have trouble with their close family relationships or friendships. The symptoms of PTSD can cause problems with trust, closeness, communication, and problem solving. These problems may affect the way the survivor acts with others. In turn, the way a loved one responds to him or her affects the trauma survivor. A circular pattern can develop that may sometimes harm relationships.

How might trauma survivors react?

In the first weeks and months following a trauma, survivors may feel angry, detached, tense or worried in their relationships. In time, most are able to resume their prior level of closeness in relationships. Yet the 5% to 10% of survivors who develop PTSD may have lasting relationship problems.

Survivors with PTSD may feel distant from others and feel numb. They may have less interest in social or sexual activities. Because survivors feel irritable, on guard, jumpy, worried, or nervous, they may not be able to relax or be intimate. They may also feel an increased need to protect their loved ones. They may come across as tense or demanding.

The trauma survivor may often have trauma memories or flashbacks. He or she might go to great lengths to avoid such memories. Survivors may avoid any activity that could trigger a memory. If the survivor has trouble sleeping or has nightmares, both the survivor and partner may not be able to get enough rest. This may make sleeping together harder.

Survivors often struggle with intense anger and impulses. In order to suppress angry feelings and actions, they may avoid closeness. They may push away or find fault with loved ones and friends. Also, drinking and drug problems, which can be an attempt to cope with PTSD, can destroy intimacy and friendships. Verbal or physical violence can occur.

In other cases, survivors may depend too much on their partners, family members, and friends. This could also include support persons such as health care providers or therapists.

Dealing with these symptoms can take up a lot of the survivor's attention. He or she may not be able to focus on the partner. It may be hard to listen carefully and make decisions together with someone else. Partners may come to feel that talking together and working as a team are not possible.

Upcoming Events

• TOWNSVILLE

Fishing Club

22nd February 2018, 10.00am to 4.00pm

Meet at Lotus Place office, 312 Sturt Street

Support Meeting

20th March 2018, 10.00am to 12.00pm

Aitkenvale Library, Petunia Street

• AYR

Support Meeting

6th February 2018, 10.30am to 12.30pm

Burdekin Library, Graham Street

• MACKAY

Support Meeting

13th February 12.00pm to 2.00pm

Gordon White Library, Phillip Street

• CAIRNS

Support Meeting

8th March 2018, 12.30pm to 2.30pm

Cairns City Library, Abbot Street

Issues with Institutions and State Governments “opting in” to the Scheme

The main practical issue with the scheme currently is that for someone to be entitled to redress under this Commonwealth Scheme, they must have suffered abuse within an institution that has “opted in” to the scheme and is therefore classed as a “participating institution”.

So far, no State governments have opted in to the Redress scheme. Some States have indicated a willingness, but there remains some recalcitrant States in this respect. Some institutions have indicated that they will opt in, but some have stated publicly that they will not.

This will lead to a very inequitable and undesirable result if not all States and relevant institutions opt in to the Commonwealth Scheme.



PHOTO: A group from Care Leavers Australia Network outside the final hearing of the child abuse royal commission (ABC News: Jack Fisher)

The Fishing Club!



Suggested Intentions for Recovery

Normal and safe wants and needs to wish and hope for...to cultivate with mental, spiritual and emotional energy.

- I want to develop a more constantly loving and accepting relationship with myself.
- I want an increasing capacity for self acceptance.
- I want to learn to become the best possible friend to myself.
- I want to attract, into my life, relationships that are based on love, respect, fairness and mutual support.
- I want to uncover a full, uninhibited self expression.
- I want to attain the best possible physical health.
- I want to cultivate a balance of vitality and peace.
- I want to attract, to myself, loving friends and loving community.
- I want increasing freedom from toxic shame.
- I want increasing freedom from unnecessary fear.
- I want rewarding and fulfilling work.
- I want a fair amount of peace of mind, spirit, soul and body.
- I want to increase my capacity to play and have fun.
- I want to make plenty of room for beauty and nature in my life.
- I want sufficient physical and monetary resources.
- I want a fair amount of help (self, human, or divine) to get what I need.
- I want God's love, grace and blessing.
- I want a balance of work, rest and play.
- I want a balance of stability and change.
- I want a balance of loving interaction and healthy self sufficiency.
- I want a full emotional expression with a balance of laughter and tears.
- I want sexual satisfaction.
- I want to find effective and non-abusive ways to deal with anger.
- I want all this for each and every other being.

(excerpted from *The Tao of Fully Feeling*, by Pete Walker, MFT)

Human Bill of Rights

GUIDELINES FOR FAIRNESS AND INTIMACY

- ◆ I have the right to be treated with respect.
- ◆ I have the right to say no.
- ◆ I have the right to make mistakes.
- ◆ I have the right to reject unsolicited advice or feedback.
- ◆ I have the right to negotiate for change.
- ◆ I have the right to change my mind or my plans.
- ◆ I have a right to change my circumstances or course of action.
- ◆ I have the right to have my own feelings, beliefs, opinions, preferences, etc.
- ◆ I have the right to protest sarcasm, destructive criticism, or unfair treatment.
- ◆ I have a right to feel angry and to express it non-abusively.
- ◆ I have a right to refuse to take responsibility for anyone else's problems.
- ◆ I have a right to refuse to take responsibility for anyone's bad behaviour.
- ◆ I have a right to feel ambivalent and to occasionally be inconsistent.
- ◆ I have a right to play, waste time and not always be productive.
- ◆ I have a right to occasionally be childlike and immature.
- ◆ I have a right to complain about life's unfairness and injustices.
- ◆ I have a right to occasionally be irrational in safe ways.
- ◆ I have a right to seek healthy and mutually supportive relationships.
- ◆ I have a right to ask friends for a modicum of help and emotional support.
- ◆ I have a right to complain and verbally ventilate in moderation.
- ◆ I have a right to grow, evolve and prosper.

DON'T FORGET: WALLET CARDS

The Historical Abuse Network participants in **North Queensland** designed these wallet cards for use in dealing with services, people or organisations to help them to understand what it is like living with the legacy of trauma.

Please let us know which card you would like and we can get it sent straight out to you



The Forde Foundation

Were you a ward of the State of Queensland?

OR

Were you were under the guardianship of the State of Queensland?

OR

Were you a resident in a Queensland institution when you were a child?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above AND you have registered with the Forde Foundation, you can apply for a grant from the Foundation to help you:

- with your dental needs
- with your studies
- obtain work and progress within your chosen field
- live independently.

If you have already registered with the Forde Foundation, please:

read and ensure you understand the relevant grant guidelines

complete the grant application form and send it to us.

If you are not sure whether you have registered, please contact us to check.

If you know you haven't registered, you will need to do this before you can apply for a grant.

March 2018 grant round

The first grant round in 2018 will be in March. Grant applications will be assessed by the Board of Advice on Thursday, 29 March 2018. All grant applications are to be submitted to the Executive Officer by no later than Friday, 9 March 2018.



Poetry

When I was a small child, I was badly abused, nobody ever knew or was slightly moved
 So I just had to live with being regularly abused
 I lost my childhood it turned so sour
 So when I was little I thought of him so many hours
 I became a challenge and was so misunderstood
 Because in everybody's eyes I could never be any good
 Tears often running down my face because I was made to feel I'm a total disgrace
 and not fit to live in the human race

Even now I remember the hurt and the pain
 I tried telling you once mum but it was in vein
 So some days I felt a burning passion some days so sad, some days an eternal
 rage just like a wounded animal trapped in a cage
 Mum now you've passed away
 I do think of you nearly every day
 Why when you used to hear me cry
 Why the hell
 Didn't you ever ask me why

Jackie 2017

Consequences
 by Marcia Bates

Simple innocence, Trusting and pure
 Expecting attention, Safe and secure

A lifetime of trust, Lost in a moment
 Childhood innocence, How much it all meant

Shattered in pieces, Like glass on the floor
 Devastation so thorough, It felt like a WAR

Shrouded in silence, Surrounded by pain
 Secrets so hidden, You pray for insane

Separate the feelings, Forget all the shame
 Hide all the memories , Take all the blame

Your life is a puzzle, Huge pieces are lost
 Swept under the carpet, All crumpled and tossed

Questions unanswered, By ears that won't hear
 Survival so fragile, It's coated with FEAR

He got what he wanted, You paid the price
 CONSEQUENCES unnoticed, He didn't think twice.