



www.lotusplace.org.au • North Queensland • November | December 2016

Welcome to this month's edition of the Lillypad
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Commonwealth redress scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse

Friday 4 November 2016

Joint media release

Attorney-General
Leader of the Government in Senate
Senator The Hon George Brandis QC
Minister for Social Services
The Hon Christian Porter MP

The Turnbull Government is today announcing a Commonwealth Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and is inviting states, territories and other non-government institutions to join in the Commonwealth scheme to deliver redress to the survivors of these wrongs.

"Today's announcement is delivering on the Coalition's commitment to strive to ensure redress is provided for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse across Australia by the responsible institutions," Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter, said.

The Government acknowledges that survivors of institutional child sexual abuse were abandoned and betrayed by many institutions, including governments, churches and charities.

"We have spent many months consulting states, territories and institutions about how we can work together to deliver redress to ensure just outcomes for survivors", the Attorney-General, George Brandis, said.

The Government will establish a best practice Commonwealth Redress Scheme and invite other governments and institutions to "opt-in" to the Commonwealth scheme on the "responsible entity pays" basis recommended by the Royal Commission.

The Government acknowledges that survivors across the country need and deserve equal access and treatment. That is why the Government is taking the lead and setting up a Commonwealth scheme to provide redress for survivors of child sexual abuse in Commonwealth institutions, and inviting states, territories and other non-government institutions to join.

While the Commonwealth is unable to force participation in a national scheme, the Government will be working closely with states, territories and other non-government institutions to work towards maximising national consistency. A truly national scheme requires the support of the states and territories.

"This is about institutions making amends and recognising the harm that has been caused to children in their care," Minister Porter said.

The Commonwealth scheme is expected to be established by 2018 and will offer a direct personal response for those survivors who seek it, options to receive psychological counselling and a monetary payment (comprising a maximum payment of \$150,000) to acknowledge the wrongdoing inflicted upon them.

The Government will also establish an independent advisory council bringing together a broad group of specialists, including survivor groups, legal and psychological experts, to provide advice on the implementation of the scheme.

Importantly, the Government is taking strong action to





Lotus Place Projects



Your Stories

New Student at Lotus Place!

Over the next couple of months there will be a student called Tommy working with us here at the Townsville office. You might speak to him over the phone or when you come into the centre, please make him feel welcome. He will also be helping us with the Stories from the North project.

Stories from the North

It is undeniable that the life experience of Forgotten Australians has created some very wise words and thoughts from many individuals. During the short time that Kylie-maree and Jordan have been a part of the Lotus Place service we have witnessed some amazing stories and reflections .

As a result we would like to create a collection of your stories, the Forgotten Australians of North Queensland. These narratives could be anything from a short memory that you have always carried to a larger journey through your childhood.

The collection will be published as the life stories of anonymous survivors (we can publish your name at your request).

“If I can change myself then I can change the future for my family.”

“..... I’m in pain 24/7 but there’s no point hating it. So I laugh at my pain, it’s my friend.”

If you would like to discuss sharing a story or memory to publish in *Stories from the North* then please contact us here at the office. If you have any other ideas about the project or suggestions on how it could be best supported we would love to hear from you.

Cooking Up a Storm!

For some time the thought of a cooking group has excited Lotus Place staff and some of our service users. There is yet to be a proper communal cooking group however it is something that we would be very passionate about discussing with all of you in the new year.

Below is some inspiration for the delicious and easy cooking we could jump into.



Peter was very keen to give it a go especially after we discussed the money he could save and convenience of having his meals already cooked while still having a healthy home made dinner.

We enjoyed about an hour of chatting, prep and cooking in the office. Then we divided everything up and he came out with 10 awesome packs of pasta and bolognese from \$20 of groceries, that’s only \$2 a meal.

We would love to look at some different menu ideas and are happy to continue trialling some one-on-one cooking with you in the office. If there are enough participants for a weekly or fortnightly cooking group





Christmas Season

Dealing with Stress

The Christmas season is just about here! We hope everyone has a safe and happy holidays. Please make sure you check our open hours for the Townsville office (on the back page) as we will be closed for approximately a week over Christmas.

We also understand that this time of year can sometimes bring up sadness and trauma so we have included the following article which suggests some tools to reduce stress at Christmas.

Beating Christmas stress and anxiety

Christmas can intensify feelings of grief and sadness.

The Christmas season is meant to be a time of joy, but for many people it can be a time of stress, anxiety, disappointment or loneliness. Christmas comes with high expectations of perfect, happy families enjoying luxurious celebrations and gifts, but not all of us are able to live up to these ideals. For many of us, Christmas can intensify feelings of grief and sadness.

Some people experience feelings of isolation, financial pressures or increased family conflict that can make this a very stressful time of year.

However, there are some steps you can take to help manage stress and anxiety during the festive period.

Taking care of money worries

Is the festive season a burden on your wallet? Here are some tips for managing your Christmas finances and reducing your financial stress during the silly season:

Identify what's causing you financial stress. Buying gifts and attending social get togethers can be expensive. Plan ways to reduce spending. For example, you could suggest to your family and friends that you only buy gifts for the kids, or organise a 'Secret Santa' among the adults. Set a budget and stick to it.

Find low cost ways to have fun. Don't let money cut you off from your family and friends. If you can't afford expensive restaurant meals or cocktail catch-ups, organise a BBQ in the park or a party at home where everyone brings a plate of food.

Dealing with family tension

Just because you're related doesn't mean your family

members will all get along. Split families and unresolved conflicts may contribute to Christmas anxiety. Family and relationship problems can be a trigger for anxiety.

Here are some ideas for getting through:

Set realistic expectations. Christmas might not be the fabulous family reunion you hoped for. Plan how you will manage any feelings of anxiety or depression that may arise.

Put the kids first. If you have children, consider putting aside ongoing adult conflicts in their interest. Think about Christmas as a day for the kids and focus on enabling their happiness.

Drink in moderation. It may be tempting to drink too much during the festive period, but alcohol can contribute to stress, anxiety and depression. Alcohol may be a problem if you're drinking to cope.

Avoid known triggers. If your family has a history of arguing over a certain topic, don't bring it up.

Managing loneliness

There are ways to overcome loneliness if you find yourself isolated or grieving a loved one over the Christmas period.

- Connect with friends and family. Even if you're separated by distance, you can stay in touch with loved ones online or by phone.

- Volunteer. Why not lend a hand to a local shelter over Christmas? There are lots of charities who need help. You'll connect with people and feel good about making a positive contribution.

- Attend community events. Find out what's on locally and get involved. Whether it's Christmas carols or local markets, getting out and about can help relieve loneliness.

- Make plans for Christmas Day. Develop a plan in advance to avoid feeling depressed or stressed on the day. Perhaps make yourself a special breakfast, buy yourself a gift in advance so that you can enjoy on the day, attend a local church service or take a stroll through the local park where you can watch families enjoying their Christmas presents.

- Stay healthy to avoid Christmas anxiety

- Recognising and changing behaviours that contribute to your stress will help you get through the Christmas period. Remember to stay healthy - eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep can help you cope with Christmas stress.





Mackay



Remembrance

Remembrance Day events were once again held in Mackay and Townsville this year. We hope that all of those who attended felt that it was a special day that held meaning and emotion. Kylie-maree and Jordan were honoured to be present and were once again reminded of your courage and strength.



It was wonderful to see so many of you come together in memory and recognition of the past. Thank you to all those who attended and read acknowledgments, it was a lovely day. We welcome any ideas and feedback for the coming years as we always wish to make these events meaningful and memorable to you.

There were some beautiful photos taken so we haven't held back in publishing several across the Lillypad. If you wish to get electronic copies then please feel free to contact us





Day 2016



Townsville

Thank you to those who contributed to the Remembrance Day art project, it was wonderful to see your thoughts, emotions and personal journeys





National Apology Celebrations • Townsville • Mackay

This year the National Apology celebrations were a bit more informal and we were really keen for it to be a day out in the park with family and friends.

It was lovely to see everyone outside having a good time with their loved ones, thank you to everyone who could make it.





Community News

Reference Group

A message and poem from the organiser of the Westbrook Family Fun Day

I have always felt to do something to right the wrongs of past injustices. Much should have been done years ago by men better than me - but all I can do is try and speak and reach out. Our Community is forever indebted to the boys that went through the Home. Those that survived are brave, strong, resilient, and we owe them a great deal of respect, recognition and gratitude. The poem I wrote is not meant to cause you any more grief - it was really my way of trying to convey what I believe many went through and how I would like to think there is forgiveness and hope for those that survived.

Clayton

The Tears of Years

*O My Heart – how thee melts.
Of years lost crying, of dreams forgotten
My parents no more I know
Forgotten, lost... I know not.
Why am I here ... in a Forgotten Place.*

Where can I go – no future for me

*The days they pass
Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring
Nothing matters anymore
My friends no more
Hell seems so real
Constant hunger, pain they grow
My body melts, and diseases grow*

*Lost I am in time no one remembers
Soulless, mindless, desperate
Father, mother I cry for thee
Heaven hear me. Take me. Time stops*

*Of age I am to leave this place
To go where to I know not.
No skills, no trade, no life for me
Steal I will to eat a meal
Take what's not mine to stay alive
No one cared nor will I*

*Time heals all – so they say
Not for me
My dreams are real
Sweat each night and fear of steps
Coming for me to do ones will
I cry, I shake, I fear all mankind*

*If only One could hear me
To take away the thoughts of death
That scare me so till I wish to end
Each day a hell, each moment of dread*

*Can one breathe and live again
Inside a mess created over time
My heart it beats much slower
And memories fade, maybe the pain can
go and I be normal again*

*A town forgotten and boys lost
Of friends that lived and breathed no
more
I have lived my life as if forgotten and
lost
Yet so small a hope can arise within
Of calls from the past that remind me of
such*

*A man that cries with me that cares
Of hope that draws me forth*

*I have hope that I can breathe
At least to live and dream again
All was lost but seems to be found
I see the One that saw all along.
He watched me grow and saw my tears*

*His blood that shook me, saved me,
healed my heart
Hatred is gone, forgiveness has come
Time is coming for me to go
It never stopped as I supposed
Waiting it was for me to forgive
So I can sleep with Peace and go Home
at last.*

The NQ Reference Group

The Reference Group has been meeting via phone conference once every 6 weeks or so. The last couple of months have seen some excellent initiatives including a petition to challenge the abuse of children in Juvenile Detention and a final draft of the Wallet Support cards.

The wallet cards are currently being printed and we are hoping to have them distributed in the coming weeks. We have several different designs so make sure you have a look at the letter we have attached about wallet cards so you can choose the one that suits you.

The Petition for Action Against the Abuse of Children in

the Juvenile Detention System is a passionate piece of writing that asks all members of the Australian community to demand that our governments take a more thoughtful and supportive approach to rehabilitating young offenders.

We have seen some good support for the petition however it would be great if everyone on our mailing list could make sure they sign and return the back page of the petition. We have close to 100 signatures from Forgotten Australians and other members of the community. Lotus Place staff will soon be contacting anyone who hasn't signed the petition to see if they would like to support it. We will also be publishing an online version through Change.org so we can spread the word and gain wider





Townsville Centre Open Hours and Service Structure

Call anytime Monday to Friday for support and referral over the phone

Monday - Thursday drop in 10am to 2pm

Friday - Appointment only

Christmas Break - Office will be closed from Friday December 23rd



LOTUS PLACE NQ IS AN ACTIVITY OF
MICAH PROJECTS INC



Upcoming Events

8 December

Cairns

12 December

Mackay
Christmas Lunch

15 December

Townsville
Christmas Dinner

