

## Sex attacks: Pair teamed up to fight off predators



### WHO ARE THEY?

#### ■ Forgotten

**Australians:** The term was first used in the 2004 Senate Report, Forgotten Australians. The report was about Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children.

#### ■ Former Child

**Migrants:** As a result of the child migration agreements between the British and Australian governments, many thousands of children were shipped to Australia in the period following World War II. These children were sent away with the expectation that they would never return, to start new lives in a foreign land, always without their families and often in harsh, understaffed institutions.

**Source: Lotus Place**

# Lotus Place helps Forgotten Aussies

**NEWFOUND SUPPORT: 'Forgotten Australian' Bob Cox relaxes outside the Swan Offices on Denison St, where the new Lotus Place has opened. BELOW: 'Forgotten Australian' Jim Smedley speaks with the CQ manager of the new Lotus Place, Mark Bunting.**

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#### Emma McBryde

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BOB Cox and Jim Smedley first met at 14 when they were fighting off regular sexual attacks and bashings at a children's home.

They joined forces at night to protect younger children who chose to sleep between the pair's bunk beds for protection from the sexual predators who were their supposed carers.

Decades later, the men are still fighting for the Forgotten Australians who were victimised, just like them.

After creating their own drop-in centre in Rockhampton for other

Forgotten Australians in 2008, Bob fiercely pushed for the advocacy organisation Lotus Place to open an office in Rocky.

The pair have finally gotten their wish.

Lotus Place provides support and resources for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants.

It was established for people harmed in church, state, foster care, detention centres and adult mental health institutions.

But office is not the right word for what Lotus Place CQ manager Mark Bunting has created at the Swan Offices on Denison St.

It's a haven for many who had their childhood stolen



from them at children's homes across Australia.

Mark said for some of the men and women, their monthly visits to Lotus Place were the only social functions they attended.

But the children's homes which haunt their dreams and minds aren't often the topics they discuss together, Jim said it was just comfortable speaking with non-judgmental people with

similar backgrounds.

He said Lotus Place was one of the best things that had ever come to Rockhampton.

Mark helps organise counselling, resources, and more. He believes there are about 100 people who identify themselves as Forgotten Australians across the Rockhampton region, and about 50 more who could also be considered Forgotten Australians.

Lotus Place is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"It's not all about bringing up the past, it's about looking forward to the future," Mark said.