



Remembering the forgotten Australians

Friday 23rd November 2011

Former Prime Minister and Member for Griffith, the Hon. Kevin Rudd, today launched the new Find and Connect support service in Queensland at a gathering of Forgotten Australians and former British Child Migrants at Lotus Place in South Brisbane. (Last week saw the third anniversary of the National Apology made by Mr. Rudd on behalf of the Australian people.)

The Find and Connect support service, launched nationally in August this year, means Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants now have access to more personal support through the Australian Government's new Find and Connect support service, operating in Queensland from Lotus Place.

Karyn Walsh, Coordinator of Micah Projects, said Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants can dial 1800 16 11 09 to get either telephone or face-to-face support from specialist staff as they search for information about their time in institutions, and trace their identities and lost families.

The 1800 number was chosen to remind people of the date on which the Australian Government delivered the National Apology.

Support from the Lotus Place Find and Connect support service will include help with record searches, specialist counselling, referral to other services and follow-up support, including peer and social support.

The national Find and Connect support service complements other measures to help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants locate their personal files, piece together their past and, where possible, reunite with family members.

This includes the Find and Connect web resource, www.findandconnect.gov.au, a valuable resource that contains information about institutions, orphanages and children's Homes, to help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants start searching for records.

The Queensland government and Australian government fund Lotus Place to provide a range of services for Forgotten Australians and former British Child Migrants in Queensland, including Find and Connect. Lotus Place can be contacted on 1800 035 588 or (07) 3055 8500.

Media contact details:

Karyn Walsh, Coordinator 0413 619 785
Kerrod Trott, Media Liaison 0412 029 663

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Who are the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants

More than 500,000 children who grew up in orphanages, foster care, children's Homes or other institutions in Australia from the 1920's to the 1980's are sometimes known as ***Forgotten Australians*** or ***Former Child Migrants***.

Over 7,000 of these children were deported, mostly from the United Kingdom and Malta, and were placed in charitable and religious institutions, often without their families' knowledge or consent. Many never saw their families again and lost their connection to their country and culture.

Children were placed in 'care' for a number of reasons, including family poverty, parental ill-health or breakdown in relationships. Some children, as young as several weeks old, were made wards of the state - not because they had done anything wrong, but because of the circumstances in which they and their parents found themselves.

Children experienced neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse during their time in 'care' and suffered from exploitation and mistreatment at the hands of the people who were responsible for looking after them.

The experiences of these children were documented in three important Senate reports:

- *Lost Innocents - Righting the Record* (2001)
- *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children* (2004)
- *Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians Revisited* (2009).

All three Senate Inquiries unanimously called for a national apology as a critical step in the healing process for those who have suffered, and who continue to suffer.



The National Apology

On 16 November 2009, in front of many hundreds of Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants in the Great Hall of Parliament House, the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP delivered the **National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants**. The Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, also spoke.

The Apology said sorry for what happened to many of these children – the loss of family, the loss of identity and, in the case of child migrants, the loss of their country.

The National Apology acknowledged that what happened in the past was both real and wrong. It ensured that a largely invisible part of Australia's history would be put firmly on the record for future generations to see and to make certain it would never happen again.