

VANISH news bulletin

September 2013

Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues

Time flies by and I am about to take some annual leave. Hard to go away when so many exciting things are happening. The new VANISH website will go live this month and I think you will be delighted to see more information for service users and for professionals. We will be adding to this new resource and next year will see a register of counsellors knowledgeable about adoption go online with a forum for them to have professional discussions.

A pilot of our brand new two day training package will occur in October with one of the city Medicare Locals. Our knowledge and awareness training package is available for general practitioners, allied health practitioners and counsellors. The training will roll out across Victoria and anyone with an interest should contact VANISH. Next year the training package will be available online.

VANISH will be 25 next year and we are preparing a keepsake coloured production of all the apologies state and federal. This will include some of the context of the Senate Report and the process for the apologies and any funding outcomes. We will also be doing a new edition of VOICE with your thoughts, poems and art work so please send in your contributions. If you are quoting or using the words of others please remember to acknowledge authorship or copyright in your contribution.

Our VANISH AGM was a delightful opportunity to meet and talk, agree on some constitutional rule changes and listen to two delightful speakers – Hana Crisp on her attendance at the South Korean Intercountry Adoptees Conference and Trish Sykes, poetess on her collection of poetry *Abbotsford Mysteries* related to her time in residence in the Abbotsford Convent.

Your new Committee of Management for 2013 - 2014 is:

Leigh Hubbard

Anne Sullivan

Ian Smith

Coleen Clare

Trish Lester

Sue Scholz

Hans Van Wilgenburg

Cathy Burnett

Chair elect

Continuing Secretary

Treasurer Elect

Manager (ex-officio)

THE VANISH Annual Report will be available online and I commend it to you for an account of the year's activities.

I look forward to bringing you more information on your committee in future bulletins and newsletters. Please let us know if you wish to join the committee or volunteer at VANISH.

Friday, 25 October 2013 is the anniversary of the Victoria Apology and we hope to have a get together to remember loved ones and to update members on the progress of the Workforce Capacity Development Project funded by DHS. We will provide you with details as soon as arrangements are finalised.



FUNDING FOR FREE COUNSELLING

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT:

VANISH understands that the Federal Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has funding available for 12 free counselling sessions for those people impacted by past adoption policies and practices.

You can access this funding by asking your General Practitioner (GP) to refer you to a counsellor in your area. If your GP is not aware of the funding tell them that it is definitely available through their Medicare Local, under ATAPS Access to Allied Psychological Services.

VANISH understands that your General Practitioner will need to develop a Mental Health Plan for you to access this funding but that this should be able to be a simple process.

If you wish to access this funding and are uncertain how to do so please do not hesitate to contact VANISH.

Liz Tomlinson or Jenny Conrick counsellors at VANISH will be happy to talk you through the process.

We believe the funding is available from every Medicare Local across Victoria so that should mean there is counselling available near where you live.

VANISH has not been involved in this funding roll-out but we are happy to do all we can to help you access this opportunity – just give us a ring on (03) 9328 8611 Tuesday – Friday.

We apologise for any confusion in the July 2013 news bulletin regarding the books To Prison with Love and What Kind of Love is This? The author of these books is Sandy Musser and not Evelyn Robinson as the article may have implied.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ON THE FORCED ADOPTIONS HISTORY PROJECT
**National Archives of Australia contribution to the recommendations of the Senate
Community Affairs References Committee report into the Commonwealth
Contribution to Former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices**



National
Apology for
Forced Adoptions

Following the [national apology by former prime minister Julia Gillard on 21 March 2013](#), the National Archives has established a project team to deliver a website, exhibition and education program that meets the objectives of:

increasing awareness and understanding of experiences of individuals affected by forced adoption practices; and

- identifying and sharing experiences of forced adoption.

In working on these developments, the Archives is conscious of the very personal and emotional nature of these experiences, which former prime minister Julia Gillard described as having contributed to 'a lifelong legacy of pain and suffering' for many Australians.

We want to ensure that what is created reflects the diversity of experiences in a respectful and thoughtful manner. This web page is a first point-of-contact and a space for initial Expressions of Interest and input to the website. All submissions will be treated with confidentiality and respect. The information provided will only be used in relation to the Archives Forced Adoptions History Project. No information received will be passed on to other parties.

Expression of interest

We are very interested to hear from you if you have, in any way, been affected by the practices and policies of forced adoption in Australia. Information shared will be handled in the strictest confidence. Your contribution will help the Archives prepare the website and exhibition. Please outline interest in the Archives' Forced Adoptions History Project via the [Expression of Interest form](#).

Website

The website to be launched in March 2014 will become a repository of memory, record and experience of those affected by forced adoption policies and practices in Australia. We hope the website will allow further sharing of experiences about forced adoption in Australia.

We hope to include a number of diverse mediums such as personal narratives, photographs, artworks, song lyrics, social documents and other records – submissions people believe will contribute to a deeper understanding in the Australian community of this issue.

The Forced Adoptions History Project team has ideas about what the website could include but we are keen to have your views also. All submissions will be treated with confidentiality and respect. The information provided will only be used in relation to the Archives Forced Adoptions History Project. No information received will be passed on to other parties. Please share your thoughts on the [Website content: what would you like to see?](#) form.

Next steps

An exhibition

An exhibition curated by the Archives will follow in 2015. The main focus will be to increase awareness of forced adoption in Australia. It will be launched at the Archives in Canberra, and tour a number of regions around the country.

Every narrative offered to the Archives is important; each person or group will receive a response. However, it should be understood that due to the anticipated interest in the project, not every submission will become a feature in the exhibition.

Education and understanding

An important part of the Archives project's role will be to produce an educational resource to build a deeper understanding of the forced adoption experience. This resource will be available online for the Australian community including secondary school students, with links to the Australian Curriculum.

The Archives is endeavouring to produce an informative website and exhibition. We ask for your patience as the Forced Adoptions History Project team works to create these projects for you to share your experience. All submissions will be treated with confidentiality and respect. The information provided will only be used in relation to the Archives Forced Adoptions History Project. No information received will be passed on to other parties.

REGIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS – what do you think?

VANISH is in the process of establishing regional support groups in Victoria for the post-adoption community. The Department of Human Services has provided a small amount of funding for the establishment of eight groups.

It is intended that the funding will be used to build upon existing support groups and informal networks in Victoria and to continue to promote self-help and mutual support. We would like your views to inform us about where groups are needed and what opportunities there are to work with existing services, venues and facilitators.

Members, friends, and anyone else in Australia with an adoption experience are all welcome to complete the survey. You can complete the survey anonymously whether it be online or by post. If you choose to share your contact details there will be kept confidential. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Only general trends and percentages will be shared publicly in order to provide feedback on the outcomes. You can complete the survey online by going to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VANISHgroups> or post to P O Box 112, Carlton South 3053

THANK YOU for taking the time to share your views with us.

Best wishes and I look forward to seeing you all in October.
Coleen Clare
Manager
VANISH Inc