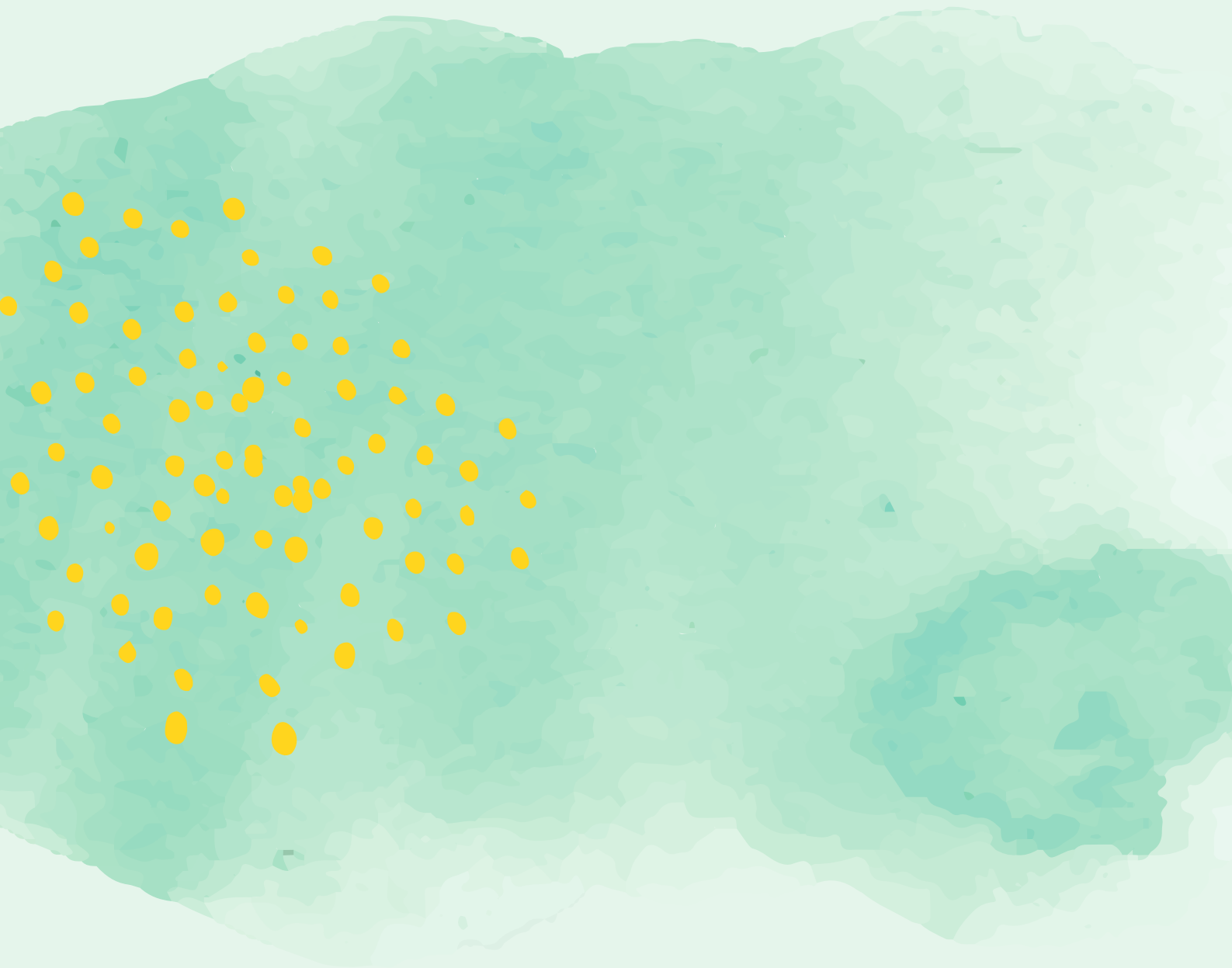




Victorian Adoption Network for
Information and Self Help



Annual Report
2022-2023
Year 35

VANISH is located in Naarm. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

OUR VISION

That the human right to genealogical connection and identity is recognised and supported in the broader community and in legislation, policy and practice.

OUR PURPOSE

To empower and assist those who have experienced adoption, donor-assisted reproduction or other separation from family members, by providing a formal structure through which to deliver efficient and effective advice, search and support services, and advocacy.

OUR VALUES

- Respect
- Empowerment
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Inclusiveness
- Self help

OUR SERVICES

- Specialist search assistance
- Support by phone, email, or face to face
- Information and resources
- Facilitated support groups
- Counselling
- Referrals to other practitioners and services
- Training for professionals
- Public information sessions
- Advocacy and policy advice

OUR SERVICE USERS

- People affected by separation and adoption (including de-facto adoption) - mothers, fathers, adopted persons and other family members
- People affected by donor conception - donor conceived persons, donor parents, natural parents and social parents
- Forgotten Australians/Care Leavers - former wards of state and/or people who were placed in institutional or foster care

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2022-23

VANISH is governed by a Committee of Management made up of volunteers who, with the exception of the Independent Experts, have a relevant lived experience. Committee Members assist the organisation to achieve its mission, purpose and goals and ensure compliance with VANISH Rules and state and federal legislation.

Members

Todd Dargan (Chair)
Maureen Long (Secretary)
Jon Phillips (Treasurer)
Hannah Spanswick
Simon Pryor
Aimee Shackleton
Amy Clarke
Charlotte Smith

Representing

Offspring
Independent Expert
Offspring
Natural Parent
Offspring
DC
Natural Family
CEO (Ex-Officio)

Term Commenced

September 2018
May 2018
September 2022
November 2020
May 2017
April 2021
September 2022
May 2016

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

VANISH services are delivered by qualified professionals with extensive experience. The majority of our staff and volunteers also have a relevant lived experience.

Name

Charlotte Smith
Gail Holstock
Patricia Navaretti
Tracey Hudson
Adelaide Tapper
SallyRose Carbines
Mary Rawson
Lorna Sleightholm
Hana Crisp
Kerri Licheni
Mandy Candlish

Title

CEO
Support Services Co-ordinator
Search and Support Worker
Search and Support Worker
Search and Support Worker
Project and Support Worker
Search Specialist
Administrator/Receptionist
Program Support Officer
Bookkeeper (Contractor)
Volunteer

Commenced

May 2016*
November 2020*
June 2018
August 2019
June 2023
March 2021*
March 2021-2023*
September 2018
January 2023*
April 2011
February 2023

*These staff members have worked for VANISH for significant periods in previous roles

SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATORS

Melbourne Adopted Persons: Gail Holstock, Cheyne Bull

Zoom for Adopted Persons: SallyRose Carbines, David Cross

Regional: Ballarat Adopted Persons: SallyRose Carbines

Albury/Wodonga Adopted Persons & Mixed: Dr Rosie Saxton, Vicky Graham

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear members,

It gives me great pleasure to present my first Annual Report as Chair of the VANISH Committee of Management. My sincere thanks to former Chair Simon Pryor for leading the organisation for the past four years and for staying on the COM and continuing to share his wisdom and expertise with us.

At the end of this financial year our membership had grown to 1,047. I warmly welcome all new members and hope that being part of our community results in beneficial outcomes for you.



VANISH's vision is that the human right to genealogical connection and identity is recognised and supported in the broader community and in legislation, policy and practice. This speaks to the need for recognition of and reparation for the harms caused by past policies and practices and also the need to scrutinise current and future policies and practices to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Victoria is the only state to have completed an inquiry into responses to historical forced adoptions and to highlight the many gaps and barriers in legislation, policy and practice. Earlier this month was the second anniversary of the tabling of the Inquiry Report and while there has been some progress on some of the 56 recommendations, we urge the Victorian Government to make haste to ensure another decade does not slip by without bringing about real changes for everyone affected.

I would like to thank Charlotte Smith, CEO and the VANISH team of staff and volunteers who have provided high quality search and support services throughout the year as well as delivering additional services and contributing to various submissions. Congratulations and well done. Ongoing under-resourcing will be a point of focus for me this coming year, my intention being to ensure that VANISH is properly funded to do the work it was established to do and to meet continuing demand in a way that is manageable and sustainable.

We have two new Committee Members being nominated this year whom I welcome and look forward to working with. I thank current members of the COM for sharing their time and expertise. In particular I want to thank Maureen Long, who has been our Independent Expert for the past five years and will be finishing up this year. Maureen has not only provided sound advice on a range of issues relating to services, ethics and governance but she also stepped in as Secretary for the past two years for which we are very grateful.

I look forward to working alongside my fellow COM members, the VANISH staff team and our funding and operational partners in the coming year, for the betterment of the community we serve.

TODD DARGAN
CHAIR

CEO'S REPORT

Dear members and friends,

VANISH has had a remarkable year this year with some significant achievements and excellent opportunities for advocacy and education through the media. We were also fortunate to receive a generous bequest from the late Sandra Pankhurst for which we are extremely grateful.

Our advocacy efforts this year have been focussed on the issues our service users have faced when engaging with Births, Deaths & Marriages Victoria, and on providing data about our past and current services to the Forced Adoption Inquiry Implementation team at the Department of Justice and Community Services (DJCS). We hope to see positive outcomes from this engagement in the coming year.

We are anticipating the Victorian Government will soon announce the launch of its redress scheme which we hope will bring acknowledgement and healing to mothers who have waited so long. Next month Integrated Birth Certificates will be available as legal birth certificates for adopted people.

VANISH continues to receive a constant stream of enquiries by adopted people, mothers, fathers and other relatives seeking assistance to search for family members. Some searches the team undertakes are complex and involve many twists and turns along the way. I admire their determination and resourcefulness in seeking answers for our service users. I am also proud of the way they have delivered the brokerage counselling scheme, supported mothers to apply for the Exceptional Circumstances Fund, responded to the surge in demand for support groups and offered wonderful therapeutic workshops, alongside their day-to-day search and support work.

Gail Holstock was promoted to Support Services Coordinator in January and is doing a sterling job overseeing VANISH's support services. We are fortunate to have had Hana Crisp back on the team since January and to recruit search specialist Adelaide Tapper who has worked with VANISH before and is already off to a flying start! The rest of the team – Lorna, Mary, Patricia, SallyRose and Tracey, have continued to excel in their provision of professional, empathetic support to our service users. Our fabulous volunteers have also made a significant contribution to VANISH services, particularly our peer support groups.

On behalf of the team, I would like to thank our colleagues at Adoption Services (DJCS) and our partner organisations Open Place and ARMS Vic for the continued positive collaboration.

I also thank the VANISH Committee of Management for their ongoing support and leadership and particularly former Chair Simon Pryor and current Chair Todd Dargan, both of whom are busy professionals but still find the time, energy and heart to assist VANISH to work towards a vision and purpose that inspire and guide the work we do.



CHARLOTTE SMITH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SEARCH AND SUPPORT

Searches Undertaken

This year the VANISH Search & Support Team worked on 271 searches, of which 131 were new searches and 140 were brought forward from last year. Last year the total was 273 with 145 being new and 128 brought forward. The two tables below show a breakdown of who the searches were undertaken on behalf of and who they were searching for. The chart below represents people sought in percentage terms, showing that 62% of searches were for natural parents and 17% for natural siblings. Last year 71% of searches were for parents and 9% for siblings. We continue to assist Open Place with searches (including DNA research) on behalf of Forgotten Australians/Care Leavers.

Cohort Searching	Created FY2023	Brought forward	Total Searches
Adopted Persons	93	106	199
Natural Mothers	14	8	22
Natural Fathers	0	1	1
Forgotten Australians	6	4	10
Forgotten Australians who were also Adopted	13	9	22
Children of Adoptees	2	0	2
Other Natural Relatives	3	12	15
Total	131	140	271

Table 1. Cohorts of people searching in FY 2023

People Sought	Created FY2023	Brought forward	Total Searches
Natural Mother	56	70	126
Natural Father	25	32	57
Natural Sibling	22	9	31
Other Natural Relative	8	15	23
Records	14	12	26
Natural Son	6	2	8
Natural Daughter	0	0	0
Total	131	140	271

Table 2. Cohorts of people (or records) sought in FY 2023

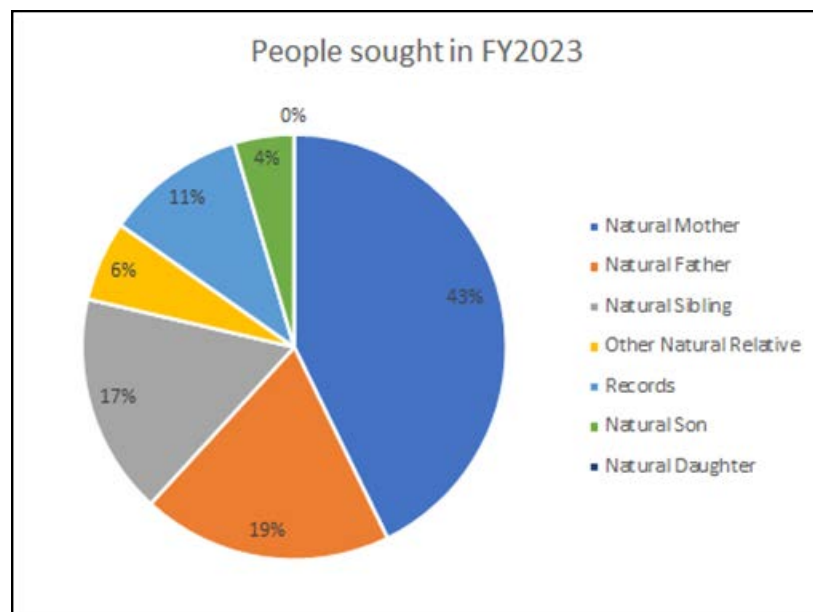


Chart 1. Cohorts of people (or records) sought in FY 2023

Completed Searches

This year 165 searches were completed or closed.

Table 3 provides the results of those searches.

Closed searches, which can be opened again at the applicant's request, include searches put on pause by applicants, and searches solved by the applicant through social media, DNA or being contacted by a relative.

Search Results	#
Found living	52
Found deceased	24
Records located	21
Not found	19
Referred to another service	1
Closed*	48
Total	165

Table 3. Results of searches

Ongoing Searches

Of the searches still ongoing at the end of the financial year:

- 74 were active
- 28 were waiting for paperwork
- 4 were on hold

Geographical Spread

Nearly half (47%) of the new searches undertaken this year were on behalf of service users from the Melbourne metro area. Table 4 below provides a full breakdown of the location of service users registering new searches.

Location	#	%
Metro	62	47
Rural / Regional	35	27
Interstate	24	18
Overseas	6	5
Unknown	4	3
Total	273	100

Table 4. Service users by location

Trends

Very sadly this year there has been a notable increase in the number of relatives found deceased, reflecting the fact that mothers and fathers are getting older as each year passes.

- Some adopted people who discovered they are adopted late in life have missed the opportunity to meet their mother and/or father which can be devastating for them. Connections with siblings have been achieved in some cases and where these go well, can be rewarding and help adopted persons piece together their identity.
- This year VANISH assisted more mothers to apply for their records than in previous years. Some of these applications related to legal cases and/or applications to the Exceptional Circumstances Fund (see page 8).
- We have continued to receive a significant number of requests for help with undertaking DNA tests to find relatives, particularly fathers.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Support and Information Services

The number of requests for support and information have continued to rise this year, with 2130 requests this year compared to 1741 last year. Table 5 below shows who the requests were made by or on behalf of. In terms of location, 906 of the requests came from Metro Melbourne, 646 from regional a rural Victoria, 365 from interstate, 67 overseas and for 146 the location was not provided. The chart below shows this in percentages.

Cohort	#	%
Adopted People	1,051	49%
Natural Parents	714	34%
Forgotten Australians and their Children and Natural Relatives	123	6%
Other	103	5%
Children & other Natural Relatives of Adopted People	85	4%
Professionals	36	3%
Donor Conceived Persons / Donors	9	<1%
Adoptive Parents	9	<1%
Total	2,130	100%

Table 5: Requests for support and information by cohort

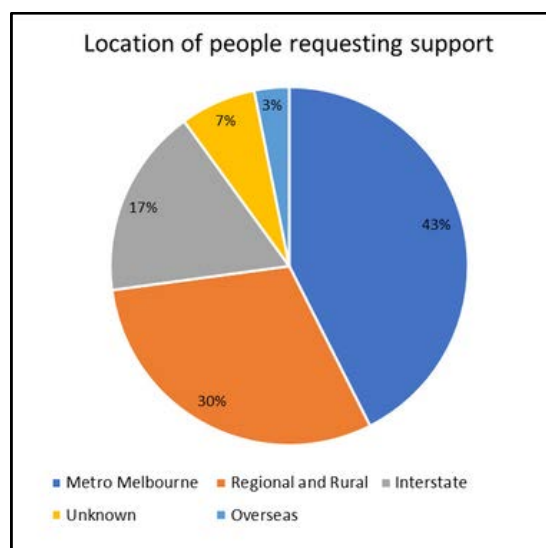


Chart 2: Location of requesting support and information

Enquiries

VANISH registers any enquiries which require detailed responses, follow up, or ongoing support. This year enquiries continued to increase, with 627 compared to 562 last year. Almost 50% (305) of enquiries were made by adopted persons and 22% (137) by mothers, followed by 8% (53) from other natural relatives. 6% (38) enquiries were either anonymous or made by people searching for a family member or missing person where there is no adoption or 'care'.

Analysis of the enquiries database using four sample months showed the most common reasons people are contacting VANISH are looking for records, requesting search assistance, requiring support, Exceptional Circumstances Fund, redress and wanting to adopt or be adopted. Chart 3, Purpose of enquiries in percentages, shows that over half of all enquiries related to records and searching.

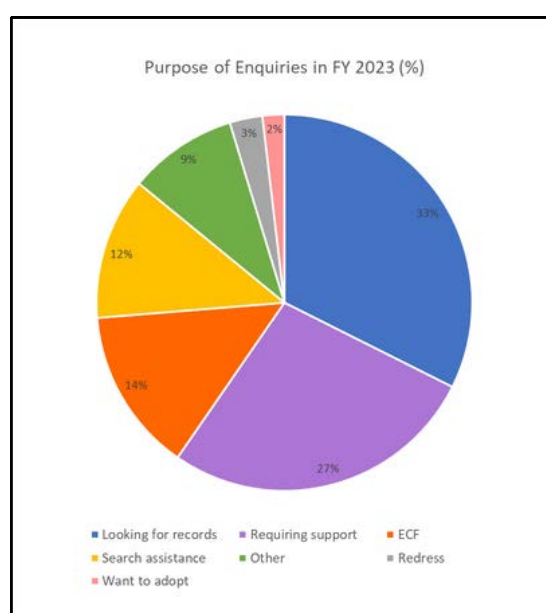


Chart 3: Purpose of enquiries in FY 2023

SUPPORT SERVICES

Counselling

This year VANISH provided another 185 sessions, making the total number delivered to date 500 (our target was 508). The total number of clients assisted to date is 75 and 27 of these are mothers and 48 are adoptees. Over the two-year period, 46 clients have completed, 11 have dropped out and 18 are ongoing. We anticipate these 18 clients will complete over the next few months.

At the end of the year the Victorian Government provided VANISH with a second tranche of funding for counselling services which has enabled us to offer referrals to those people on our waiting list, as well as individuals approaching VANISH for the first time. VANISH is now undertaking an evaluation of this program.

Support Groups

VANISH provided peer support groups in Albury-Wodonga, Ballarat, Melbourne and on Zoom this year. All groups are facilitated and co-facilitated by people with professional training and/or lived experience. A total of 249 attendances were recorded this year compared to 208 last year. A breakdown of attendance is provided in Table 6 below.

Average group attendance was 7.1 this year (9.3 for metro groups and 5.1 for regional groups) which continues the increasing trend over the past four years as shown in Chart 4 below.

Location	No. of groups	No. of attendees	Adopted Persons	Natural Mothers
Regional	17	87	68	19
Metro	17	162	162	0
Total	31	208	196	12

Table 6: Support Group Attendance FY 2023

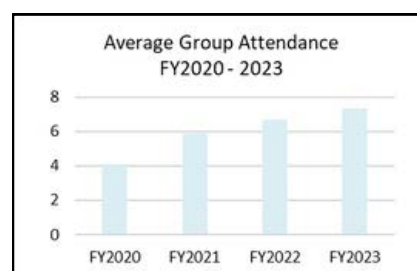


Chart 4: Average Group Attendance FY2020-23

Exceptional Circumstances Fund

The Victorian Government's Exceptional Circumstances Fund (ECF) was established to provide a one-off payment of up to \$10,000 to mothers facing circumstances such as a terminal or critical illness that resulted in them requiring assistance before the redress scheme is established. It closed in June.

In total, VANISH responded to over 100 enquiries and supported 46 mothers to complete their application. Some mothers required very little assistance to apply for the Fund but requested support with applying for and receiving their records. Some required home visits to assist in preparing their paperwork, or for VANISH to liaise with the Forced Adoption Inquiry team on their behalf. VANISH is still supporting a few mothers who are still waiting for the outcome of their application.

Most of the mothers whose applications were successful have fed back to VANISH that the ECF has been life changing for them both in terms of the payment which they used to improve their quality of life, and the validation and support they received. VANISH anticipates the redress scheme for mothers will be announced in the next month or so.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

10th Anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions

The 21st March marked the 10th anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions, delivered by then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard. To commemorate this milestone, the Commonwealth Government hosted a dinner for over 100 people in Canberra and the Hon Amanda Rishworth, Minister for Social Services, read a Statement of Significance in the House of Representatives. Guests included individuals directly affected by forced adoption, representatives from support and advocacy organisations, and those who worked to achieve the National Apology in 2013. Two representatives and six guests attended from VANISH.

Speakers at the dinner were Minister Rishworth, Prof Nahum Mushin and Nicola Roxon who read Julia Gillard's speech. Speeches can be read at: <https://bit.ly/anniversaryspeeches>



Charlotte Smith with former senator Rachel Siewert

On 22 March, Minister Rishworth spoke in Parliament about the apology and acknowledged that there is more to be done to meet the needs of those affected, but guests were disappointed when the only announcement in this regard was funding for training for aged care, allied health and Forced Adoption Support Service providers. The Minister concluded: *"We recognise that the pain has not gone away and will never go away. We recognise that the search for identities continue and more support is needed. We need to look at what more we can do to better support the people impacted, to do better for everyone who was let down by society and the institutions that they should have been able to trust to protect and care for them, and to make sure Australia never forgets this shameful chapter and never makes the same mistakes again."*



Marie Meggitt and Jo Fraser from ARMS Vic in front of Julia Gillard's portrait

A mother attends the 10th anniversary event in Canberra

I attended the dinner evening at the National Portrait Gallery on the 10th anniversary of Julia Gillard's apology to the victims of forced adoption in 2013. My daughter came with me. I really did not know what to expect, but I wanted to shake Julia Gillard's hand and say thank you for having the courage and insight to apologise all those years ago. Unfortunately Julia was not there.

I have never been with anyone else who was a victim of this cruel practice and was overwhelmed by the collective sadness and anger in the room.

It was much more beneficial for my daughter than myself. My children have always known I adopted out a baby boy in 1972, but not the circumstances. It broke her heart to find out what they did. She is a mother herself. My children definitely look at me differently now and understand why I get over emotional in certain situations.

We actually left early, I was really sad for the people who had had no closure. Fortunately I have, I waited 50 years. I will never tell my son he was taken not given for adoption. I am glad I went for my children's sake.

VANISH and ARMS Vic commemorative event in Melbourne

On Saturday 25 March, VANISH and ARMS Vic held a commemorative event at the Taken Not Given memorial statue in St Andrew's Place Reserve, Melbourne.

The guest speaker was the Hon Nahum Mushin AM, who led consultations around Australia in the lead up to Julia Gillard's apology. Nahum shared his disappointment that no meaningful announcements were made at the event in Canberra. He also noted some of the challenges facing the adoption sector, including the number of different representative groups without a coordinating body or unifying voice.

Nahum concluded by talking about the need to increase the profile of forced adoption, suggesting that the Stolen Generation could serve as a kind of model for community organisation and societal recognition, and that "a national day [for forced adoption] would increase awareness enormously". He encouraged us to continue to raise awareness and advocate more for our community.

Jo Fraser from ARMS delivered a speech written by ARMS founder Marie Meggitt.

Marie's speech acknowledged that while the apology has deepened the public's knowledge of adoption, ten years later, adoption is still a highly contested issue and our community's experiences have not yet attained the legitimacy we seek.

She also expressed disappointment in the lack of concrete measures—"the other part of an apology"—in Minister Rishworth's announcement, but pointed out the opportunity to educate the Minister and her public servants about what proper redress should look like.

VANISH CEO Charlotte Smith also reflected on the anniversary and what is yet to be achieved. Charlotte talked about the recent apology for historical adoption practices in Scotland, driven by activists inspired by Julia Gillard's apology, and expressed hope "that the ripple effect of the Australian apology continues across the world".

Charlotte concluded by encouraging everyone to keep moving forward as a community: "May we be stronger and louder together. May we realise that it is safe to ask for and receive support from one another."



The Hon. Nahum Mushin AM

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

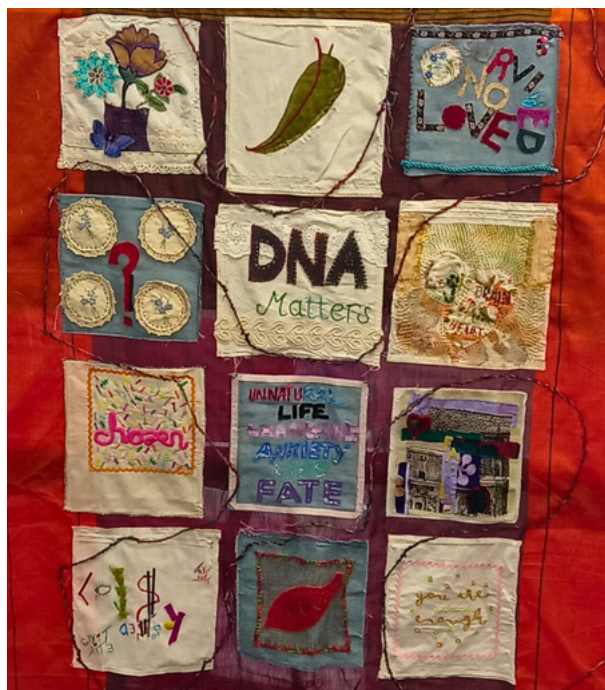
Exploring the common threads of adoption through textiles

On Sunday 2 April, VANISH held the first textile workshop specifically for adoptees to come together and explore the “common threads” of adoption.

Facilitated by Melbourne textile artist Nicole Kemp and VANISH worker SallyRose, eight participants gathered at Melbourne’s Laneway Learning Centre for a day of craft and community.

Nicole, a passionate stitcher, supported each person to capture their thoughts and feelings onto a square of fabric. Nicole quickly eased any anxiety about creativity or skill by guiding participants through stitching techniques and ideas.

The workshop was devised by SallyRose, who was disappointed by the lack of outcomes for adoptees in the 2021 Parliamentary Inquiry into forced adoptions in Victoria and was compelled to speak out as an adopted person herself.



“But finding our voice [as adoptees] can be hard,” said SallyRose. So she wanted to provide a different medium for expression, that could ultimately form a collective piece representing the “common threads” of adoptee experiences.

Participants described the workshop as “validating of feelings about adoption” and a “safe place”. For one participant, the most valuable aspect was “the conversation [with other adoptees] whilst having busy hands – was quite surprised at my level of comfort.”

Nicole said: “It was beautiful to see the participants express their complex ongoing experiences through stitch. Again, stitch provided the safe environment needed to relax and to share thoughts and feelings.”

If you are an adoptee who is interested in creating your own square to be added to the collective banner shown above, please contact VANISH for more details. The banner will be displayed at appropriate events.



Art Therapy and Writing as Therapy offer new pathways for freedom and self-discovery

This year, VANISH was delighted to offer another Art Therapy course for adoptees – back by popular demand – with art therapist, meditation teacher and adopted person Michele Hutchins.

From 8 June to 13 July, a group of six adopted people came together weekly at MacLaren Hall in Hawthorn to explore the adoption experience through different creative techniques in a safe, supportive space.

All five participants who submitted feedback at the end of the course reported that they found the course valuable, spoke highly of Michele the facilitator, and would recommend the course to other adoptees. David wrote:

“I would unequivocally recommend this course to all adoptees, regardless of their journey or personal experiences. All the totally varied participants grew enormously from the course.”

Art Therapy for Mothers will take place from October to November this year.

Our Writing as Therapy courses for adoptees and mothers, facilitated by author and writing teacher Dr Sian Prior, were also well received. Sheryl, a participant in the Writing as Therapy for Mothers course, wrote:

“It was as if Sian gave me a key that unlocked an infinite space where I can place all of my deepest fears and emotions, and where I’m learning I can take charge of them. The freedom I feel I’m gaining from that is immeasurable.”

Following the Writing As Therapy courses, a few participants told us that they were interested in writing their life stories, so we approached Sian to share her expertise in a special webinar about memoir writing, offered to all VANISH members. The session was skillfully compered by Susan Thomas, an adopted person, VANISH member, and Librarian at Wheelers Hill Library. It was a rich and thought-provoking session and we had some wonderful feedback afterwards.

VANISH creative workshops are supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services through Relationships Australia Victoria’s Forced Adoption Support Service.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Reckoning with the Primal Wound documentary film screening

On 21 November, VANISH hosted a free screening of *Reckoning with the Primal Wound*, a documentary by New York filmmaker and adoptee Rebecca Autumn Sansom, co-produced with her natural mother Jill Hawkins. The event was held at Ross House in Melbourne.

The film explores relinquishment trauma through Nancy Verrier's landmark book *The Primal Wound* and features Verrier herself along with psychologists Dr. David Brodzinsky and Dr. Amanda Baden.



Author Nancy Verrier

The discussion after the screening indicated that the film's themes strongly resonated with adoptees in the audience, and their partners too. We would like to thank VANISH member Lauren Howe for her role in arranging the event and refreshments.



Castlemaine locals Sally Guildford and SallyRose

Raising awareness in Castlemaine

In March, VANISH worker and Castlemaine resident SallyRose was interviewed by the Castlemaine Mail about the inspiration for the VANISH *Common Threads* workshop, with local writer and performer Sally Guildford. Sally's solo theatre show *Don't Wait!*, which debuted at the Castlemaine Fringe Festival around the 10-year anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions, explored her own experience of the enduring impact of adoption and family secrets. SallyRose attended the performances and was available for anyone who wanted to chat after the show.

VANISH CEO on ABC Compass

Journalist Suzanne Smith covered the story of the hidden children of priests, including Victorian adoptee Brendan Watkins, for ABC TV's *Compass* (13 August), including an interview with VANISH CEO Charlotte Smith. Charlotte said: "It's really important to investigate what happened. We have quite a few adoptees over the years who have found no paper trail. And it's so important for them to get recognition and acknowledgment that these practices went on."



Charlotte Smith during filming for ABC Compass

ADVOCACY

Last year we reported on the outcomes of our member survey regarding the recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Historical Forced Adoption in Victoria and the Government's response. Below is a brief update on the key areas we covered.

Redress & Statute of Limitations

The redress design team at DJCS has undertaken consultations with mothers regarding the redress scheme and we anticipate the outcome of their deliberations and internal processes will be announced in the near future. We await an update regarding the Attorney General's undertaking to amend the Limitations of Actions Act 1958 (Vic).

Records

Adoption records have now been centralised so that all applications are made through the Adoption Information Service. We still await updates regarding hospitals and institutions identifying remaining records and explaining lost or destroyed records. Adoption Services have commenced publishing data relating to adoptions and adoption information applications. This is available on their website.

VANISH has been strongly advocating on some challenges our community have faced with BDMs Vic, including meeting Danny Pearson, Minister for Government Services. We hope our representations will result in positive outcomes and more supportive policies and procedures.

Support Services & Training Professionals

The inquiry implementation team at DJCS has been undertaking a review of services and we await their findings and news regarding the recommendations that support services be properly resourced and mental health services be funded. Training for professionals has been included. In the interim, VANISH has been funded to provide subsidised spots on our two-day counsellor training.

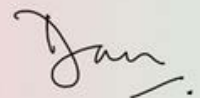
Birth Certificates

Legislation was passed in Parliament in May 2022 for Integrated Birth Certificates to be available from 5th October 2023. Adopted adults will be able to apply for an IBC to use as their legal birth certificate. This certificate will show their name at birth and adoptive name, and the names of their parent(s) at birth and their adoptive parents. The first issue will be free.

Your birth certificate should reflect who you are - **every part of you.**

That's why we've introduced legislation to recognise birth parents and adoptive parents on birth certificates.

It's what Victorians who were forcibly adopted want, and **it's the right thing to do.**



FINANCIAL REPORT

Committee's Report for the year ended 30 June 2023

Your Committee members submit the financial accounts of VANISH Inc for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

Committee Members

The names of the Committee members at the date of this report are:

Todd Dargan (Chair)
Maureen Long (Secretary)
Jon Phillips (Treasurer)
Simon Pryor
Hannah Spanswick
Aimee Shackleton
Amy Clarke

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were: search, counselling and support services for people affected by adoption, state wardship, donor assisted reproduction or other separation from family, as outlined in the Rules of VANISH Inc.

Operating Result

The profit from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to:

Year ended	Year ended
30 June 2023	30 June 2022
\$21,640	\$(57,775)

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

Jon Phillips (Treasurer)

Todd Dargan (Chair)

SUMMARY PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
INCOME		
State Govt Funding	619,462	574,515
Open Place MOU	47,846	47,861
RAV Small Grants	16,089	0
Interest Received	13,054	1,253
Donations	51,694	1,902
Other Income	1,201	22,130
Total Income	749,346	647,661
EXPENSES		
Administration	17,637	12,262
Communications	6,644	5,025
Depreciation	2,882	1,085
Employment	604,527	507,589
Finance Expenses	15,052	7,377
Reimbursement of Legal Expense Provision	(40,162)	0
Governance & Compliance	7,153	9,760
Information Technology	12,444	14,047
Prof Development & Staff Supervision	8,272	4,968
Property	58,755	51,803
Service Expenses	6,648	84,924
Stakeholder Engagement	3,433	2,582
Utilities	4,422	4,014
Donations Paid	20,000	0
Total Expenses	727,706	705,436
Net Profit	21,640	(57,775)

SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	597,395	631,483
Accounts Receivable	488	40,188
Total Current Assets	597,883	671,671
Non-Current Assets		
Security Deposit Howard Street	10,000	10,000
Property, Plant and Equipment	19,858	8,439
Total Non-Current Assets	29,858	18,439
Total Assets	<u>\$627,741</u>	<u>\$690,110</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors and Accruals	36,198	12,586
GST Liability	10,228	12,320
Payroll Liabilities	15,659	13,456
Provisions	63,569	112,915
Grants Carried forward	21,336	78,005
Reserves	0	31,614
Total Current Liabilities	146,990	260,896
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provision for Long Service Leave	13,100	14,816
Total Non-Current Liabilities	13,100	14,816
Total Liabilities	160,090	275,712
Net Assets	<u>\$467,652</u>	<u>\$414,398</u>
EQUITY		
Cash Reserves	0	(31,614)
Current year Earnings	21,640	(57,775)
Retained Earnings	446,012	503,787
Total Equity	<u>\$467,652</u>	<u>\$414,398</u>

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2023	2022
Net Income	21,640	(57,775)
Adjustments for depreciation and amortization	2,881	1,085
Changes in cash flow from trade receivables and deferrals	39,700	(28,534)
Changes in cash flow from trade payables, provisions and accruals	(84,009)	53,989
Net changes in inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	\$ (19,788)	\$ (31,235)
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for plant and equipment	(14,300)	-
Net cash flow from investing activities	\$ (14,300)	\$ -
Net cash flow	\$ (5,488)	\$ (31,235)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year	631,483	662,718
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	597,395	631,483
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	\$ (34,088)	\$ (31,235)
MOVEMENT IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022		
Opening Balance	446,012	503,474
Historical Adjustment	-	313
Cash Reserves	-	(31,614)
Current Year Earnings	21,640	(57,775)
Total Equity	\$ 467,652	\$ 414,398

Financial Declaration by Members of the Committee for the year ended 30 June 2023

The Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 2 to the financial statements.

Per section 60.15 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013

The Responsible Persons declare that in the Responsible Persons' opinion:

(a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and

(b) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission Regulation 2013.



.....
Chair: Todd Dargan



.....
Treasurer: Jon Phillips

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023

The functional and presentation currency of VANISH Inc. is Australian dollars.

1. Basis of Accounting

In the opinion of the Committee of Management, the Association is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to exist users of the financial report who are not able to command the preparation of reports tailored to satisfy specifically all of their information needs. These special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. VANISH Inc. is a not-for-profit entity as required by Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors, AASB 120 Accounting for Government Grants and Disclosure of Government Assistance, AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards, AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures and AASB 1058.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

Significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, demand deposits and short-term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value. Bank overdrafts also form part of cash equivalents and presented within current liabilities on the balance sheet.

(b) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result, and that outflow can be reliably measured.

(c) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Employee benefits expected to be settled more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements. Changes in the measurement of the liability are recognised in profit or loss. Employee benefits are presented as current liabilities in the balance sheet if the Association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting date regardless of the classification of the liability for measurement purposes under AASB 119.

(d) Property, Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment are carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment of losses.

Plant and equipment are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life to the Association, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

(e) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is recognised when the amount of the revenue can be measured reliably, it is probable that economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Association and specific criteria relating to the type of revenue as noted below, has been satisfied.

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is presented net of returns, discounts and rebates.

Interest Revenue

Interest is recognised using the effective interest method.

Rendering of Services

Revenue in relation to rendering of services is recognised depending on whether the outcome of the services can be estimated reliably. If the outcome can be estimated reliably then the stage of completion of the services is used to determine the appropriate level of revenue to be recognised in the period.

If the outcome cannot be reliably estimated then revenue is recognised to the extent of expenses recognised that are recoverable.

Grant Revenue

Government grants are recognised at fair value where there is reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and all grant conditions will be met. Grants relating to expense items are recognised as income over the periods necessary to match the grant to the costs they are compensating. Grants relating to assets are credited to deferred income at fair value and are credited to income over the expected useful life of the asset on a straight-line basis

(f) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

AUDITOR'S REPORT



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Directors

Lionel R. Arnold CA B.Bus
Raelene Cheng CPA B.Com

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF VANISH INC. FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Vanish Inc., which comprises the financial position as at 30th June 2023, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including summary of significant accounting policies and managements assertion statement and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Vanish Inc. as at 30th June 2023, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter- Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Vanish Inc. to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

Lionel R. Arnold
Chartered Accountant

Dated 24th August 2023
J L Collyer & Partners
Unit 7 603 Boronia Road Wantirna Victoria

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The VANISH Committee of Management and staff wish to thank:

[The Late Sandra Pankhurst](#) for her incredibly generous bequest to VANISH to support the work we do.

[Adoption Services, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victoria](#) for funding VANISH services and for our ongoing positive working relationship to achieve our shared goals.

[Forced Adoption Inquiry Implementation team, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victoria](#) for the collegiate engagement around support ECF applicants and the adoption services review.

[Open Place](#) for our long-standing partnership and funding searches for Forgotten Australians, including DNA research.

[ARMS Victoria](#) for our partnership and collaboration over many years and jointly arranging commemorative events for our members.

[Sparke Helmore Lawyers](#) for pro bono legal advice relating to the VANISH Rules.

[Members and Friends](#) who have made financial or in-kind contributions to VANISH this year.

[VANISH service users](#) who have trusted VANISH to assist and support them in a deeply personal and profoundly important area of their lives.

THANK YOU!

VANISH welcomes voluntary donations at any time to enable us to extend our services.
Give now at www.givenow.com.au/vanishinc

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