

ALLIANCE FOR THE FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

VOICE *Newsletter*

Communicating with AFA's supporters, members and allies is critical. The VOICE Newsletter provides news and updates about our work with and on behalf of Forgotten Australians across the country.

FROM HOMES AND FOSTER CARE TO DECADES OF ADVOCACY

The remarkable journey of an inspirational Forgotten Australian



Caroline Carroll is a founder member of AFA and its most recent outgoing chair. She was a long-time community education coordinator at Open Place (VIC). Separated as an infant from her family, including her seven siblings, Caroline spent her formative years in institutions such as Bidura, Lynwood Hall and King Edward Girls Home, as well as in six different foster homes. In 2014 she was awarded the Order of Australia for her work with Forgotten Australians.

You were recently in Canberra for a ceremony at the National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse – what did that mean to you?

It was the turning of the first sod. It's a long time coming – six years since we started this project. Tanya (Minister for Social Services Tanya Plibersek) is very keen to get it completed. I think we're all very pleased to see that actually it's happening.

You've had multiple dealings with government at state and federal level over many years. Do you have a better understanding of how they operate now?

Yes and no. There are so many organisations and individuals that need help or recognition and AFA is one of many. The Senate inquiry gave us great hope way back in 2004, but all the recommendations went by the by. The federal government said, "not our problem, it's a state problem". This isn't true because they took our child endowment and used it rather than give it to the parents which may have helped some kids stay out of Homes.

Some governments have been better than others. When Jenny Macklin was the minister, she was an absolute star. She worked really hard to get the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse, but also with our Apology, the museum exhibition, that was her. Bill Shorten was terrific. Malcolm Turnbull was unbelievably good. They're all empathetic – every single one of them – but the bottom line is not enough has been done.





A dormitory at Lynwood Hall.

You've often mentioned that there's a lack of visibility around the experiences of Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

People don't seem to understand that there's a Stolen Generation, former child migrants, as well as us. I have felt that we're the poor relatives out of all of them. I remember saying to someone that I grew up in an institution and she said, "But you're not mad – why would you be in an institution?" People just did not know.

I went to a reunion at Lynwood Hall (Guildford, NSW) and there were people there who said, "We were dying to get in here to have a look at where they kept the bad girls." But I was a baby, so what did I do wrong? It seems that it was somehow our fault, whereas with the Stolen Generations it's very clear cut it wasn't their fault.

There seems to be an all too convenient blurring of the lines between places like Parramatta Girls Home where juvenile offenders were housed alongside people like you.

That's true. Most who got to Parramatta did have some sort of perceived issue with bad behaviour, but we were all treated exactly the same. And yet what was our crime?

How do you manage to balance your own needs with being such a vocal advocate?

Not very well at times. I've had lots of good people around me who encouraged and supported me. They were really great people who encouraged me and said at times to pull your head in.

How did your advocacy begin?

I didn't talk about my childhood, I didn't fill in the blank spaces. It was when CLAN had their first meeting. My sister-in-law gave me a ticket and said go see what it's about. From there they asked me to be the Victorian voice of CLAN. I was so nervous – I could make scones and biscuits – but as for standing up there and talking, no way. There was a lot of learning.

Is it something of a survivalist ability that you're able to shut things out about your early experiences?

Yes, but I also think part of it was shame. I didn't want people to know I was in a Home, because they would tell you in the Home, "Your parents didn't want you, who else would want you?" You think to yourself, how did I end up in this position? Why did no one want me as a child? Where were my brothers and sisters and why did they keep us all apart?

Kids were somehow blamed and some of the people they employed [in the institutions] were just sadistic. Miss Davies, who was in charge of Lynwood Hall when I was there, called us by numbers. I saw her king hit kids. She used to have a bunch of keys and she hit a girl over the head with them and knocked her out cold. Who's accountable for that? These people had to have had a screw loose to run those places.

My first foster mother was an alcoholic, her husband was an alcoholic, and she belted the shit out of us. I cannot believe the child welfare department left me and two other girls for almost seven years with that woman.

When you had your own family, was there wariness or just determination to be different?

I just think they were mine. Now I'm sitting in the house I was in when my son was born – it's a complete circle. I thought nothing's going to hurt him and I'm not going to hurt him. I'm not saying I was a great mother, but I'd do anything for my kids. They always came first.

Beyond redress, what do you think are the most important actions government should provide – healthcare, counselling, housing?

We're all counselled out. I think aged care, because to return to an institution where we were vulnerable again fills us with fear. We made a film about this called *Open Doors*, which shows the terror of a Forgotten Australian during his first night in a nursing home. There's a lot of Forgotten Australians who are not eligible for redress because they weren't

sexually abused. It is just appalling they could say that and live by that. What they allowed to happen to these kids, they're treating them no better as adults, if not worse. At least when they were in a Home, they could sleep and get fed. Neither one of these luxuries were particularly safe. As an adult, they're on their own. I mean, how do you account for 500,000 of your own children, that you couldn't look after, and didn't try to look after, and allowed all these terrible things to happen to them?

Do you think the Find and Connect services and organisations like Open Place have in a way allowed governments to shuffle the responsibility down to agencies?

Yes. I remember having a real blue with someone [a manager] who said, "You people need to be retrained here – they don't understand what they're working with." I said, "When has your staff come over and tried to understand who we are? We need to train you before you can train us."

You don't get how we feel. We don't even feel like second class citizens – we felt like we weren't even a citizen. And people say, "It's a long time ago, can't you get over it?" Well, no.

You've rubbed shoulders now with some very prominent people, including the great Jack Thompson. What memories do you have of advocating alongside Jack?

Jack was great. He really put himself out there. At first he said for the grace of God, he could have been one of these kids in a home. He did the film for us (*Who Are The Forgotten Australians?*) and opened the exhibition (Inside: Life in Children's Homes and Institutions). Very easy to talk to; what you see on the screen is what you get with Jack. He's a lovely man.

What is something you'd like people to remember when they read your story?

I survived, sometimes even thrived, but many didn't. I honour those who didn't make it.



Caroline at the National Museum of Australia's 'Inside' exhibition in 2011. © NMA

APPLICATIONS FOR REDRESS IN VICTORIA EXTENDED UNTIL 31 DECEMBER 2026

Redress for Historical Institutional Abuse is for people who experienced physical, emotional or psychological abuse and/or neglect as children in institutional settings in Victoria before 1990.

This differs from the National Redress Scheme as the focus is on non-sexual harm in care, exclusively in Victoria.

To be eligible, you need to have lived in a Victorian institution as a child for at least 6 months before 1 January 1990. People who apply and are found eligible will be offered:

- a payment of up to \$20,000
- a personal acknowledgement or apology
- up to 20 counselling sessions.

Open Place is funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to help people apply.

To find out more:

OPEN PLACE

1800 779 379

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES FAIRNESS AND HOUSING

1800 716 870

EMAIL

victorianredress@dffh.vic.gov.au

WEB

services.dffh.vic.gov.au/redress

FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIAN AWARENESS WEEK FEATURE

FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS AWARENESS WEEK (FAAW) IS A NATIONAL INITIATIVE THAT HONOURS FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

This year FAAW will be celebrated from **15 – 22 November 2026** with the theme: “**Ensuring Forgotten Australians are remembered**”.

How do we ensure Forgotten Australians become Remembered Australians?

The week is an opportunity to recognise Forgotten Australians, their place in the history of institutional care, their resilience and the advocacy that has helped drive change.

FAAW acknowledges everyone with lived experience of institutional care. It seeks to ensure Forgotten Australians are seen, heard and remembered, so children today and in the future do not endure similar harm.

Via the combination of social media, events, awareness raising, publications – such as the ‘Purple Book’, AFA’s Aged Care booklet, **Voice** newsletter and AFA’s dental campaign – we seek to keep attention on issues that impact Forgotten Australians.

Why is such a week important?

A lack of public and professional understanding around the historical and lifetime impacts of institutionalisation remains a primary barrier for Forgotten Australians accessing services. Initiatives from the AFA continue to focus on shifting visibility and building institutional accountability.

What are the key events planned?

There will be a virtual launch held on 17 November, alongside activities and events locally in each state. More information will be available from the Find and Connect Services closer to the week.



Retiring directors to be acknowledged

During the course of FAAW, the significant and lasting contributions of retiring directors Dave Henderson and Karyn Walsh will be given due acknowledgement. One of Dave’s greatest legacies was unveiled in Glenorchy, Tasmania, late last year: a memorial dedicated to Forgotten Australians. A passionate advocate, we salute Dave’s efforts over many years.

Karyn was appointed as a director of the AFA Board in 2017. She came to us as the long-time CEO of Micah Projects in Queensland (which operates Lotus Place). For more than 30 years, Karyn led its work through strong advocacy and an unwavering commitment to social justice. Her measured and clear-sighted contributions to the Board are greatly appreciated.

We will also acknowledge Jan Schaffarz (South Australia) for years of tireless championing of aged care outcomes, and to Heather May for her consistent advocacy of the Northern Territory.



CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NATIONAL MEMORIAL



Caroline Carroll (middle) pictured with Tanya Plibersek (left) and Federal Member for Canberra Alicia Payne (right).



The memorial design

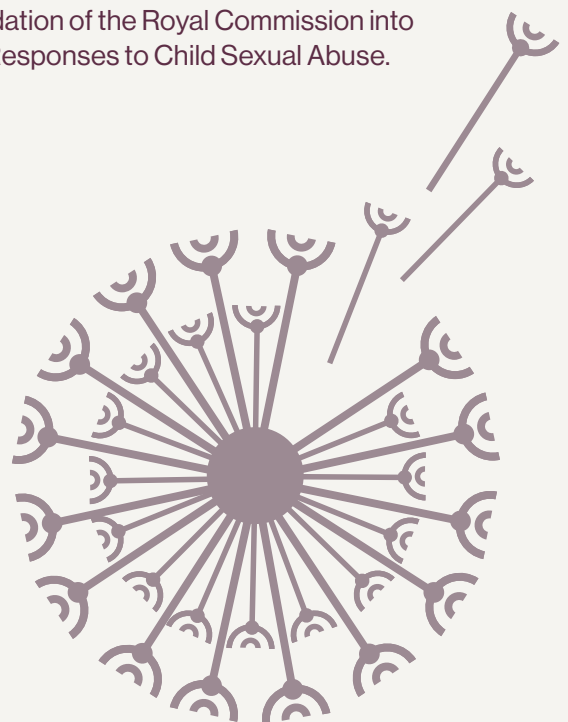
The National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse will provide a place for reflection, healing and connection for victims, survivors, families, supporters and the wider community. It will recognise the experiences of those affected by institutional child sexual abuse, and support healing and truth.

A sod-turning ceremony at Acton Peninsula in Canberra on 8 September 2026 marked the start of construction. Minister for Social Services Tanya Plibersek, Assistant Minister for Social Services Ged Kearney and Federal Member for Canberra Alicia Payne, and advocates Caroline Carroll and Christine Foster were among the first to turn the soil at the site.

The ceremony brought together members of the National Memorial Advisory Group, government representatives and construction project partners. Advisory group members, including people with lived experience, advocates and sector leaders, have played an important role in shaping the memorial and continue to guide its development.

The memorial, designed by SUPERSENSE Studio, will feature a metal sculpture set among stone forms and plants. The design aims to connect with the experiences of victims, survivors, their families and friends. It was. The completed memorial is expected to open in 2027.

DSS is partnering with the National Capital Authority to deliver the memorial, in response to a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



LOTUS PLACE

A PLACE FOR QUEENSLANDERS TO CONNECT, HEAL AND SEEK JUSTICE

Lotus Place provide services for people who are living with the lifelong impacts of institutional childhood abuse in Queensland.

It is a safe place to connect, heal, build resilience and access justice.



Services include:

- an information resource centre and gateway
- personal and skills development opportunities and peer support activities
- support for regional peer networks and activities
- individual advocacy and support to seek access to government and community services
- help to seek redress of past abuse
- help to obtain personal records, reconnect with family and trace your history
- access to professional support and counselling

Key services explained:

SAFE SPACE AND PEER SUPPORT

A secure environment for victim-survivors to connect with peers, share experiences and join group activities.

ADVOCACY AND REDRESS

Assistance with navigating the National Redress Scheme, civil/criminal legal processes and internal institutional or church complaints. Though it is acknowledged that these schemes cannot heal the trauma of these injustices, they do provide the chance for people to be heard and their pain to be acknowledged. You may be eligible for:

- A monetary payment
- Access to counselling
- A direct personal response from responsible institution/s.

HISTORY AND RECORDS

Tracing personal care records, obtain history and reconnect with family. Part of the Find & Connect Services network, helping survivors of childhood abuse in an institutional setting to trace their origins. We may be able to help you:

- Trace and reclaim your identity
- Restore relationships with family
- Access support services, such as counselling
- Build community

LOTUS PLACE LOCATIONS

BRISBANE	46 Cleveland Street, Stones Corner	(07) 3347 8500 or Freecall 1800 161 109
TOWNSVILLE	382 Sturt Street, Townsville	(07) 4722 8100
ROCKHAMPTON	10 Albert St, Rockhampton	(07) 4999 4300

Contact: lotus@micahprojects.org.au



St Joseph's College,
Nudgee QLD.

*Image courtesy of the John
Oxley Library, State Library of
Queensland.*

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ANNOUNCES PAYOUT PROPOSAL FOR VICTIM-SURVIVORS

In July 2026 the Trustees of the Christian Brothers put forward a revised proposal that could improve outcomes for people with current and future abuse-related claims.

This follows a difficult period for victim-survivors, after the organisation sought a pause on civil claims, saying it did not have enough funds to continue making payments.

This created uncertainty for people waiting for settlements, court outcomes or redress. Under the new proposal, Edmund Rice Education Australia would take responsibility for current and future legal proceedings involving the Christian Brothers, as well as claims made through the National Redress Scheme.

The arrangement is part of a revised creditors' scheme of arrangement and still needs approval from both creditors and the Supreme Court.

The Trustees have said the revised scheme is expected to provide a better outcome than liquidation or the earlier proposal.

If approved, current claimants with settlements or judgements would be paid in full, and Edmund Rice Education Australia would take on liability for relevant matters going forward.

Federal Social Services Minister Tanya Plibersek welcomed the announcement and acknowledged that recent uncertainty had been hard for victim-survivors. She said applications involving the Christian Brothers can continue to be lodged under the redress scheme and will be processed.

AFA will continue to monitor the matter and share updates as more information becomes available. Anyone affected is encouraged to seek support from trusted advocacy, legal or redress services before making decisions about their claim.



NATIONAL AGED CARE TRAUMA AWARENESS PROJECT EARLY FINDINGS



Funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, this three-year national project will deliver training and education from January 2027 to help the aged care workforce better recognise and respond to the needs of Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

It aims to strengthen person-centred, trauma-aware care by raising awareness, building workforce skills and centring the voices of people with lived expertise, workers and sector experts. The project will also identify barriers to training and pathways to meaningful change.

The preliminary research has been extensive, involving 107 Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers participants and 250 professional participants (including aged care workers, educators, researchers and sector advocates). The early findings are detailed below.

Strong desire to be identified

Some 78 percent of Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers expressed a strong desire to be identified and have their needs recognised when accessing aged care services. This includes being asked whether they have experienced out-of-home care, sharing their backgrounds and needs with providers and workers, and having the opportunity to share this information during assessment or intake. At the same time, there was strong consensus that people should have a choice about whether and when they disclose this information, with questions approached gently, respectfully and without pressure.

How much do aged care workers know about Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers?

Around 60 percent of aged care workers reported little to no understanding of Forgotten Australians/Care Leavers. While 90 percent said training on supporting people with childhood trauma or out-of-home care experience would be useful, fewer than 30 percent reported a good understanding of trauma-aware care.

When asked if they felt confident supporting people with a history of childhood trauma or out-of-home care, nearly half said they did not feel confident. Both the survey and focus groups point to significant knowledge gaps about Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers and trauma-aware practice across the sector.

It is worth noting that actual awareness across the wider workforce may be even lower than these statistics suggest, because participants were reached through established sector networks, their baseline awareness and proactiveness are likely higher than average.

Project update: National Advisory Group

We were fortunate to receive strong interest from both aged care professionals and Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers. We've now recruited 10 members from across the country (five Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers and five professionals) and have held our first introductory meeting. The group will provide ongoing feedback and insights to help ensure the training reflects the needs of the community and aged care workforce.

*Material courtesy of Chloe Lin,
Relationships Australia SA*



STANDING TOGETHER: NAVIGATING OUR AGEING YEARS WITH DIGNITY, CHOICE AND CONTROL

A MESSAGE FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS



As Forgotten Australians and care leavers, we have carried the impacts of childhood institutionalisation throughout our lives. Today, as our community ages, our challenges haven't disappeared – they have taken on urgent, new dimensions. With so many of us navigating later life without strong family networks or safety nets, AFA is committed to making sure no survivor has to face these systems alone.

Reclaiming control over how we age

The prospect of entering aged care facilities causes genuine, understandable fear for our cohort. Roster-driven routines, communal dining and closed doors echo the institutional environments where we were once harmed.

AFA continues to push governments and providers for trauma-informed, flexible in-home aged care so survivors can age safely in their own homes.

To help our community take charge of their options, we have published practical tools – including our booklet **Getting Started with Aged Care: A Practical Guide for Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers** – designed to help you demand the care, privacy and respect you deserve.

Healthcare, dental trauma and fair support

Neglect and violent discipline in childhood have left lasting physical damage. Routine healthcare can be intimidating, and dental care is often fraught with terror due to past forced extractions without pain relief.

AFA is actively campaigning to bring essential dental care under Medicare for seniors and care leavers, removing the unfair financial burdens that force survivors to endure untreated pain.

We are also educating health and aged-care professionals through targeted training packages so they understand our trauma and treat us with dignity.

Records, redress and lasting recognition

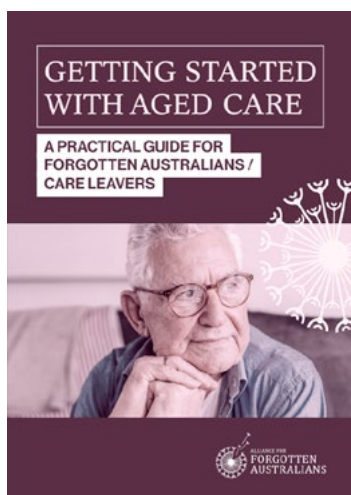
Reliving past trauma for the Royal Commission or the National Redress Scheme has taken an enormous emotional toll. We know the ongoing frustration of redacted records, bureaucratic delays and unfinished business around statewide redress and meaningful public memorials.

AFA continues to fight at the highest levels of government for fully funded, trauma-informed counselling without restrictive time limits, as well as true accountability and open access to our personal records through services like Find & Connect.

We are here for you. You are not alone.

Visit forgottenaustralians.org.au to download our guides, read our submissions and connect with specialised state-based support services. Together, our voices remain powerful and unbroken.





AFA LAUNCHES 'GETTING STARTED WITH AGED CARE'

The Alliance is pleased to launch its newest publication to support Forgotten Australians: ***Getting Started With Aged Care – a practical guide for Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers.***

This guidebook aims to provide information to Forgotten Australians on how the aged care system can support their needs as they age. In addition, AFA wants to raise awareness regarding Forgotten Australians' exposure to elder abuse and how to seek supports.

The publication is being distributed via the Find and Connect Services in each state. If you would like a copy posted to you, please email your address and the number of booklets required to: admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au

WINLATON – AN INSTITUTION THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY

Established in Nunawading, Victoria, in 1956, the Winlaton Youth Training Centre was a state-run juvenile facility intended to relieve severe overcrowding at Turana Youth Training Centre. Originally built as a maximum-security institution for 45 female offenders aged 14 to 18, actual enrolments frequently exceeded 100.



The site incorporated three internal security sections – Goonyah (maximum), Warrina (medium) and Karingal (low) – as well as the Leawarra transitional hostel (1959) and the Winbirra Remand Centre (1960). Although operated separately under a single superintendent, Winbirra housed nearly every female state ward in Victoria between 1960 and the 1970s.

During the 1950s and 1960s, shifting welfare legislation and moral panics broadened admissions beyond criminal offenders.

Consequently, girls facing domestic abuse or deemed “exposed to moral danger” were detained alongside convicted youths. An on-site Department of Education school operated independently, though access was often severely restricted despite many residents being committed for truancy.

Former inmates remember Winlaton as a harsh, rigid institution. Over the decades, it introduced various controversial programs, including experimental “triad” therapy, tattoo removal and the unapproved administration of the contraceptive Depo-Provera to girls as young as 13.

Witness testimonies submitted to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse about life at Winlaton included appalling sexual and physical abuse meted out by staff, visitors, social workers and fellow residents. At times, disclosures to staff about such abuse were met with physical punishment.

By the 1970s and 1980s, congregate institutions had fallen out of favour. In its final years, the facility was renamed the Nunawading Youth Residential Facility and began accommodating boys aged 10 to 14. Winlaton closed permanently in 1993 and the site was subsequently redeveloped into a housing estate.

THE FIGHT CONTINUES FOR BETTER DENTAL CARE FOR FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

While the AFA continues to campaign for subsidised and better dental care access for Forgotten Australians, it is vital that people are aware of who to contact for support around this issue. Find & Connect services can and will help you access dental care and advocate on your behalf.

For example, Open Place in Melbourne receives annual funding from the Victorian Government to support Forgotten Australians in meeting costs related to their health needs. This includes dentistry. They can also help Forgotten Australians navigate mainstream and specialist health services and, where possible, negotiate with health providers to maximise benefits.

Meanwhile, in Brisbane, Micah Projects' Inclusive Health and Wellness Hub is designed to give everyone a 'fair go' in the healthcare system to break the cycles of health inequality. Services include GP, dental, wellness and pop-up vaccination and health tests.

Forgotten Australians experience higher rates of poor dental health, which increases their risk of chronic health conditions and underscores the urgent need for targeted action.



IMPACT ON FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

Dental issues have a severe impact on diet, speech and confidence for thousands of Forgotten Australians. They are forced to wait months, if not years, for what is classified as 'non-urgent' public dental care. A significant causal relationship has been established between chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, and suboptimal dental health.

DENTAL CARE SHOULD BE ADDED TO MEDICARE

Policy experts and dentists agree that dental services should be added to Medicare in stages to manage cost pressures. The Australian Dental Association suggests a means-tested scheme, with a capped amount available to every individual every couple of years. Some children are already eligible for free or low-cost dental through Medicare, and Forgotten Australians should be eligible as well.

HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE FOR BETTER DENTAL CARE?

AFA is asking Forgotten Australians / Care Leavers to add your voice to this campaign by:

- Emailing or writing to your local MP and demand dental care under Medicare
- You can find details about your MP at aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members
- Flyers about the campaign are available at Find & Connect services:
Call **1800 16 11 09**
or visit findandconnect.gov.au





ALLIANCE FOR THE
FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

VOICE *Newsletter*

Issue 05, October 2026

Alliance for Forgotten Australians
Email: admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au
Website: forgottenaustralians.org.au

Still unfinished business, still fighting for justice.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services