

Bits & Pieces

Jigsaw Qld: (07) 3358 6666 - FASS: 1800 21 03 13 - www.jigsawqueensland.com



Welcome to Bits & Pieces Winter Edition

Bits & Pieces is a quarterly newsletter produced by Jigsaw Qld. In each edition we aim for a mix of stories and information encompassing various perspectives relating to adoption. It also includes stories & information about our Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS). If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please email us at support@jigsawqld.org.au.

Punxsutawney Phil predicts 2.5 more months of winter, so here is some reading material! Anna's client shares her story of a 'no' not being forever. Caroline guides us through ways to connect when the search ends. And we report on the donor conception hearings.

1

**DONOR CONCEPTION
HEARINGS**

P8

2

**WHEN THE SEARCH
ENDS**

P5

3

**SAVE THE DATE!
2022 Event Dates P8**



A 'no' isn't always forever P2.



DNA session first of many P4.



9th Anniversary Event P4.

A ‘no’ isn’t always forever

Submitted by Anna Crockett (FASS Practitioner)

The interview below is with a mother who has been working with Jigsaw Qld’s FASS to establish contact with the son she lost to adoption. Names have been changed / withheld by request.



Q: What brought you to Jigsaw QLD?

Forty something years ago, I had a baby boy who I named “Craig”. I was a teenager and very young and the decision to adopt my son was made for me. At the time, a relative told me that if I ever tried to find Craig that I would be sued and go to jail. Despite this I never forgot Craig and I never gave up hope that I would find him

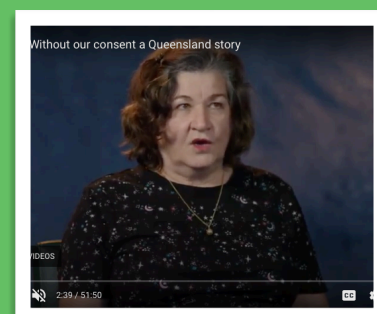
one day. I had two other children and, when they were old enough, I told them about their half-brother Craig. We always remembered him, especially around his birthday and Christmas and everyday I thought about him.

About twenty years ago, I contacted a not-for-profit organisation and asked them to help me find Craig. They tracked him down and found out that Craig’s adoptive mother and father had split up and Craig and his adoptive mother had returned from another state to Queensland. They also informed me that Craig had



Have you watched the *Without Our Consent: A Queensland Story* oral history yet? The interviews feature a mother who was forced to give her child up for adoption (Anne), an adoptee (Jo), and a father who was coerced into placing his son for adoption (Alan). It also includes interviews with representatives of post adoption organisations and Queensland politicians.

This video is a must watch for anyone affected by adoptions between 1950 and through the 1980s. You can watch it here: <https://www.jigsawqueensland.com/without-our-consent-a-qld-story>



experienced some health difficulties during his childhood. At that time, Craig told them to let me know that he didn't feel that he was ready for contact with me. I was very disappointed and it took me quite a while to accept this. However, I promised myself that one day I would try to contact him again; my hope was that because he was a young man there was a chance that he might change his mind as he got older.



Q: How did Jigsaw QLD support you to find your son?

When I first contacted Jigsaw I was so happy to learn that as Craig's birth mother, I had a legal right to apply for his adoption information with the Queensland government. It was a relief to hear that I would not go to jail or that I would be sued for doing this!

Jigsaw supported me to fill in the forms to apply for Craig's adoption information. Then the wait began. Now that I had begun searching again for Craig, it was hard not to think about him and wonder what sort of man he was now? During this waiting time, Jigsaw helped me to write a first letter to Craig. Finally, Craig's adoption information arrived -it was amazing to read my son's hospital records for the first time. Even though we had Craig's full adoptive name, he was not to be found on any electoral roll in any state in Australia, nor could he be found

from searching Jigsaw's standard databases. (Jigsaw did find an address for Craig's adoptive father in another state). Jigsaw sought help from their volunteer genealogist to find Craig but frustratingly he could not be found. I found this time really hard because I began to wonder if Craig was actually still alive.

Jigsaw then helped me to organise the necessary forms for a death search and to order a birth certificate from the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM). The reason for requesting a Birth Certificate was because it might reveal if Craig's name had been changed if his adoptive mother had remarried. Jigsaw also organised for a death and birth certificate in the State where Craig had lived prior to his parents break up. No record of a death was revealed in either state. Craig's birth certificate did not show any name changes either. However, finally I had Craig's birth certificate; the first document that linked me to him as his mother.

Since the BDM searches across two different states revealed no clues for Craig's possible last name change, Jigsaw decided that as a last resort, they would contact Craig's adoptive father. Surprisingly, this process was very straightforward and he responded quickly and provided Jigsaw with Craig's last name.



Jigsaw then searched the electoral roll and found Craig's address and sent him an outreach letter. It had taken so long to get to this point and in a few short days things had moved very quickly. I couldn't believe it!

Q Where are you now with reconnecting with your biological family?

Craig received Jigsaw's outreach letter and phoned them. He then accepted my first letter and photo that was waiting on file for him. I am now eagerly waiting for Craig's letter to me.

*** Mother and son are now looking forward to beginning their relationship and this example shows that sometimes a 'no' is not always forever.**

of DNA to track birth parents and other relatives.



Less workshop and more question and answer session, it was a great opportunity for attendees to ask questions and learn about how DNA can be used in conjunction with adoption records and intermediary services to lead to reunion.

The group also discussed the tools that can be used to connect people affected by adoption with their families.

This was the first virtual information session we've held, and based on the feedback it is hoped they will become a regular event.

Even floods couldn't stop the commemoration of the 9th Anniversary of Federal Apology for Forced Adoptions



DNA Virtual Info Session

by Caroline Slade (FASS Team Leader)

Jigsaw Qld's Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) held their first virtual Information Session for 2022 in May. The interactive session was led by Diane Cuff who talked about the use





On the heels of the February 2022 floods, the 9th anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions was held on the just re-opened Roof Terrace of the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA).

Queensland was still in the beginning stages of recovery.

A highlight of this year's event was the personal experiences of reunion shared by Sue Bond (adoptee), Vivienne Timmermans (mother) and Allan Hill & Chris Mundy (father & son). At the conclusion of their shared stories, there were few dry eyes. Reunion is not possible for all those impacted by adoption and still fewer experience a smooth road; however, the stories we heard reflected hope, strength and a determination to move forward.



(Left to right) Sue Bond, Vivienne Timmermans, Chris Mundy & Allan Hill.

Thank you to all who were able to attend during a particularly challenging time for Queensland.

The event was organised by the Forced Adoption Support Service (Jigsaw Qld) in association with ALAS Australia, Association for Adoptees, Origins Qld and You Gave Me A Voice.

When the search ends

by Caroline Slade (FASS Team Leader)

Flood debris was still floating down the Brisbane River as people affected by forced adoptions gathered to remember. It was poignant to reflect on the resilience of people affected by forced adoptions while the river and so much of

For some adoptees the search for their biological parents ends at a gravestone. This abrupt ending can create an overwhelming sense of grief and sadness made worse by a lack of answers and a profound sense of guilt for a search left too long.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Do you have a story to tell? If so, we'd love to hear from you. We regularly feature personal stories, poems and articles in our newsletter and on the website, or you can submit a form to be interviewed on the podcast. Email us at support@jigsawqld.org.au or go to www.jigsawqueensland.com/adopt-perspective to fill in the podcast prospective guest form.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations such as Link-Up have a process for these cases known appropriately as a “graveside reunion”.



These special types of reunions allow the returning child to grieve the loss of their parent (or, in some cases, child) while at the same time being given the opportunity to reconnect with their extended family, community and country.

What can the broader adoptee community learn from this to allow these graveside endings to become reunions that comfort grief and loss, with connection and being part of something larger and more grounded than that one relationship, rather than a lack of closure.

The first lesson is that you cannot have one without the other. Grief and loss are an essential part of the journey.

Sometimes the end of a search does not come with a gravestone but a parent whose sadness

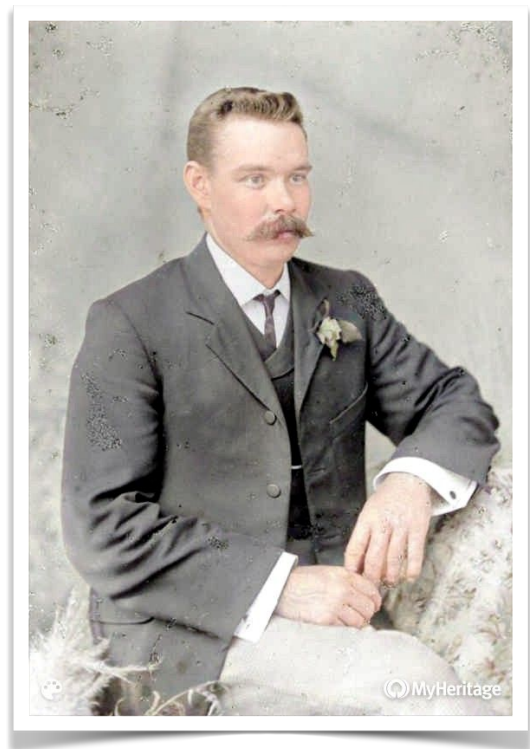
and trauma prevents a relationship from taking root or the difficulty of biology with no shared history proves too large an obstacle.

It is still a harm that is compounded by the unprocessed grief of the original loss.

The second lesson is the more complicated process of building a family tree - the putting together an understanding of the people that



came before you, whose stories and relationships created you.



This understanding of family allows a sense of being part of something bigger to grow. It can foster the start of an uninterrupted narrative that changes the sense of disconnection to one step in a much larger story.

Community is a broader sense of belonging. It relies on a shared understanding of life and its hardships and celebrations. It can be experienced in two very different ways.

One is by spending time in the community that parents or grandparents were part of. The other is to join with the adoptee community through attending events or being part of a peer support group. These two, in balance, can provide the comfort of a shared story.

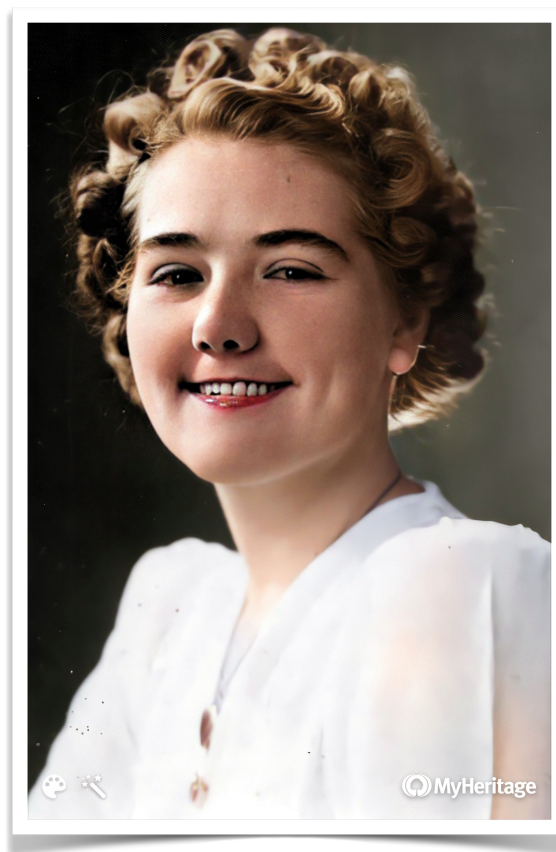
The final step is being grounded to country which for Aboriginal people provides a deep sense of identity, purpose and belonging.

This is something special and unique in Aboriginal culture that refers to the connection between people and the land developed over hundreds of thousands of years.



But, it is possible to ground yourself in the places that were home to your family, to walk in their footsteps and experience the same dirt underneath your feet, the same sky above you.

These simple steps can provide a sense of connection to place that allows an almost spiritual grounding to the past and a place to start your future.



Queensland Government hearings to consider the rights of donor conceived people

On the 13th May the Queensland Government hearings into matters relating to donor conception information took place at Parliament House.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee heard from a number of courageous donor conceived people, donors, donor recipient parents and representatives of organisations such as Donor Conceived Australia to determine whether a statutory register of donor conception information should be established in Queensland.



This marks an important moment in Queensland history, where the rights of people who are donor conceived to access genetic information about their donors is being debated.

Submissions can be read and the hearings viewed via this link: <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=0&id=4150> A report is expected by 31 August, 2022.



2022 Events

Support groups are adhering to current government recommendations and directives. To get the latest information, please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page. The below dates are our scheduled meeting dates - restrictions allowing.

Adoptee Meetings and Mothers' Morning Teas are held on the ground floor of SANDS House, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm.

Participation at the groups is free for members (suggested \$5/head donation for non-members).

Open Information Events - 3 events / year.
Dates TBA.

Adoptee Support Group - (1.30pm - 3.30pm)
9 July, 10 Sept, 12 Nov.

Mothers' Morning Tea - a regular morning tea from 10am to 12 noon (address above) 20 July, 21 Sept, 16 Nov.