

# Bits & Pieces

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## Welcome to Bits & Pieces Summer 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 Service (FASS). If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please email us at [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au).

It's summertime and what a year it's been! From natural disasters to pandemics we've weathered it all. Find out what we've been up to as we transition into 2023 in the Summer edition of Bits and Pieces.

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## Finding Joy - 2022 Retreat for Adopted People

*From the 7-9 October (2022), Jigsaw Qld's Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS) held a retreat for adopted people at Cedar Creek Lodges in idyllic Mt Tamborine.*



2022 Retreat Attendees

The theme of the weekend was 'finding joy' and participants fully embraced this search. In an atmosphere of safety, companionship and surrounded by rainforest, the group found common ground and mutual support.

In addition to a beautiful backdrop, the accommodation and menu provided by Cedar Creek Lodges was superb.

The retreat was possible through a partnership between Jigsaw Qld's Forced Adoption Support Service and Association for Adoptees and was funded by the Small Grants program Forced Adoption Support Services.

## Student's Retreat Reflection

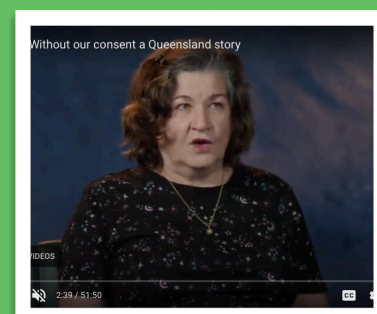
*Below is a reflection about the retreat from Bachelor of Social Work student, Kirsteen McCowie who joined us as part of her placement. We've enjoyed having you as part of our team, Kirsteen, and wish you well in your career!*

I have just completed my final placement for a Bachelor of Social Work at Jigsaw Queensland in the Forced Adoption Support Service (FASS). Before Jigsaw, I had very little knowledge of the significant, lifelong impacts of adoption.

In early October, I had the opportunity to attend an adoptee retreat with a theme of finding joy and healing. In the beautiful natural surrounds of Cedar Creek Lodges at Mt Tamborine, the retreat was an opportunity for adoptees to take part in a series of workshops over two days that were designed to explore a variety of ways to

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>



connect with each other as well as their own strengths and to find strategies to uplift, inspire and empower them in their lives.

No two adoption stories are identical; however, there are many shared experiences among adoptees and these brought the group together on the retreat with a common understanding that they are not alone in their journey.

Throughout Friday afternoon everyone got settled in and then gathered for drinks and an amazing dinner served in the Rainforest Restaurant. Many conversations ensued and continued long into the night.

The workshops on Saturday were presented by The Joy Dispensary and aimed to connect the body and mind playfully through expressions of sound, movement and rhythm. Liv and Stace brought so much enthusiasm and energy to the workshops which helped spread joy throughout the group.

Following the high energy of the Joy Dispensary, Colleen Bernard led the group through a junk journaling workshop to create a personalised



Attendees enjoy dinner and conversation

memento to take away from the weekend. Colleen explained that finding enjoyable hobbies can create a welcome distraction from the lifelong trauma commonly experienced by adoptees. Everyone who took part created some beautiful pages with a variety of personal meanings.

On the final morning, I led a workshop using Christine Miserandino's spoon theory. Using spoons as a measurement of energy, everybody took the time to think about how much physical and emotional energy they use in a day and gave each activity a spoon value.



Joy Dispensary Drumming Session



Attendees plant their strengths

I then asked how they would spend their spoons if they only had twelve for a day and to think about strategies they could use to increase their

spoons. Spoon theory encourages people to think about boundaries and self-care to help plan ahead for their low energy days.

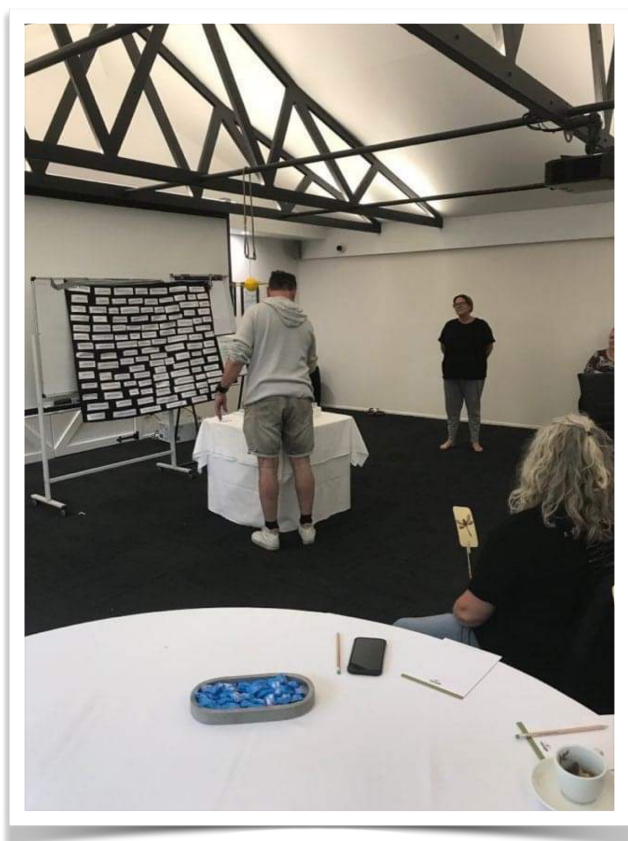
FASS Practitioner, Rachel Bell then led the final workshop of the retreat about strengths. With a backdrop of strengths words and using the dragonfly to represent change, transformation, adaptability, and self-realization, Rachel, applied these ideas to what it means to be an adoptee or an “adaptee”.

After some time to think about their own strengths, each group member then wrote a personal strength onto a dragonfly card, shared this with the group and planted their dragonfly in a miniature garden. It was a really uplifting way to end the weekend on a high note before indulging in yet another delightful meal and saying our goodbyes.

Seeing peer support in action was fantastic and many who attended made connections that will last into the future. Some adoptees left the retreat feeling far less alone in their journey than when the weekend started and it was great to see the smiles all round.

## Jigsaw reaches into regional Queensland, prisons & aged care facilities

In September we had the pleasure of meeting with the counselling team at CatholicCare Social Services - Toowoomba Region to discuss ways to better support people affected by adoption who are living in regional Queensland.



Strength words workshop

As a student and non-adoptee, it was an incredible privilege to be part of this weekend and I will take much of what I learned into my future social work career.



(Left to right) CatholicCare Counselling Team - Team Leader Leah Millward, FASS Team Leader Caroline Slade & Jigsaw Qld President Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow

Earlier in the year we also connected virtually with the organisation’s Central West team.

This visit was part of Jigsaw Qld and our Forced Adoption Support Service’s overall strategy to educate mental health professionals about the impacts of adoption and to ensure more people can access support services, no matter where they reside in Queensland.

Throughout the year we have also outreached to prisons and aged care facilities to build relationships with professionals and meet with residents.



Kirsteen & Anna hand out morning tea in a bag.

Our FASS Team again supported AdoptTEA events during Queensland Mental Health Week (8-16 October). The morning tea events are aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the impacts of adoption on adopted people and reducing the stigma associated with reaching out and seeking support; the events bring together adoptees, their family and friends, post-adoption support workers and professionals.

We also interviewed the creator behind AdoptTEA, Judy Glover about the initiative on Adopt Perspective podcast (14 September), so tune in to find out more.

Jigsaw financially supported several events across Queensland and our FASS team handed out 'morning tea in a bag' on the streets of New Farm, meeting many people affected by adoption.



FASS Team support AdoptTEA initiative

Each new connection is one more link through which people affected by adoption might learn that help is available now.



AdoptTEA creator, Judy Glover

If you work for an organisation that would like to learn more about the lifelong impacts of adoption, available services or create a referral network, please email us on [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au) or phone (07) 3358 6666.

## 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](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au) or go to [www.jigsawqueensland.com/adopt-perspective](http://www.jigsawqueensland.com/adopt-perspective) to fill in the podcast prospective guest form.



## Adopt Perspective podcast Season 3 over & out

The final episodes of Season 3 of Adopt Perspective podcast are now live and Season 4 planning and recording is well underway.

We thank our courageous guests who opened their hearts and shared their stories with us this year in the hope they might help someone else along their path.

Our final episodes of this season included ABC Journalist, Sarah Dingle (12 October) talking about donor conception, her book, *Brave New Humans: The dirty reality of donor conception* and documentary, *Inconceivable: The Secret Business of Breeding Humans* now showing on SBS On Demand. If you haven't listened yet, you must! Then go watch her documentary (and read her book!).

While you're there, listen to Darryl Nelson (28 September) share his personal experience of discharging his adoption in Queensland and Jigsaw President & FASS CEO, Jo Sparrow & Trevor Jordan discuss a topic you've likely heard a bit about in recent months...REDRESS (26 October).

Not sure if podcasts are for you? Adopt Perspective isn't a talkshow style format. We discuss the adoption experience from the



ABC Journalist Sarah Dingle talks donor conception & her book, *Brave New Humans*

perspectives of mothers & fathers who have lost children to adoption, adopted people and their loved ones, so we may learn and grow from the perspectives of others.

We share personal stories and explore adoption topics including adoption loss, the psychological impacts of adoption, forced adoption, indigenous adoption, inter-country adoption, searching, reunion, healing and many others.



Darryl Nelson - I am adopted, I was adopted

Adopt Perspective interviews adults affected by adoption as well as practitioners, people involved in inquiries, research, legislative change and apologies, artists, film-makers and authors.

The podcast is hosted, produced and edited in-house by Jigsaw's President, Dr Jo-Ann Sparrow.

We receive a lot of feedback and reviews about the podcast and thought we'd share a few of them here to help you decide if Adopt Perspective is for you.



*"I have to thank you for putting me onto the podcast, it has given me a completely different*

*perspective and at times has left me speechless."*  
(Adopted person)

*"The podcasts were informative in a practical way, plus it was reassuring to listen to the stories of other people's journey with adoption. All the best to you for future podcasts."* (Mother)

*"I agree with Heather's (podcast guest) comment that people at Jigsaw just 'get it'. Jigsaw Qld has earned my trust in our calls and there is nobody else who understands at the same level."* (Mother)

*"I'm not able to come to support groups for geographic and other reasons and the podcast has been so helpful to listen to."* (Adopted person)

*"I very much enjoyed Lois' story on the podcast."*  
(Adopted person)

*"I've listened to quite a few of the podcast episodes now. They are very good. It is a great thing you are doing producing this podcast, it will be incredibly beneficial to all who listen."* (Former Judge)

*"It is such a brilliant and supportive podcast, which I only just found. I had been listening to the American and Canadian podcasts and had hoped that we would one day get an Australian podcast. I did a massive binge last week to catch up and have listened to some episodes a few times with my husband, just so he can try to understand too."*  
(Mother)

*"It is such a good podcast. I've recommended it to people who otherwise wouldn't know about forced adoption. Thanks again and keep up the good work. This is such an underrepresented issue."*  
(Person working on govt inquiry into Forced Adoptions)

*"I found Trevor's approach and way of speaking on the recent podcast episode very calming and reassuring."* (Mother)



The Hon. Julia Gillard

2023 will mark the 10th anniversary of the national apology for past forced adoption policies and practices. Season 4 will open with an interview with the former Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Julia Gillard who delivered the apology. Stay tuned!

Adopt Perspective can be listened to on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Deezer, Castbox, Pocket Casts, Amazon Music, Overcast and from the [Jigsaw website](#).

## Jigsaw Queensland AGM

The Jigsaw Queensland Inc. Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 10 December at 11.30am in the meeting room, 505 Bowen Terrace, New Farm.

For information on Management Committee nominations, proxy voting or memberships, please contact the Jigsaw office on (07) 3358 6666 or email [support@jigsawqld.org.au](mailto:support@jigsawqld.org.au) will be held

## 2022 / 2023 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 & Open 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 Support Group - (1.30pm to 3.30pm)**  
2022 dates - 10 Dec (doubles as an end of year gathering, bring a plate to share). 2023 dates - 11 Feb, 8 Apr, 10 June, 12 Aug, 14 Oct, 9 Dec.

**Adoptee Support Group - (1.30pm - 3.30pm)**  
2023 dates - 14 Jan, 11 Mar, 13 May, 8 July, 9 Sept, 11 Nov.

**Mothers' Morning Tea - a regular morning tea from 10am to 12 noon (address above)**  
2023 dates - 18 Jan, 15 Mar, 17 May, 19 July, 20 Sept, 15 Nov.