

Support Service for Forgotten Australian



Newsletter No: 1—October 2009

On 14th September 2009, the Minister for Community Services, the Hon Lisa Neville, MP announced that Berry Street and Relationships Australia have been awarded the contract to establish this new Service. We are both very excited about the opportunity to work with Forgotten Australians and other stakeholders to set up and operate this much needed Service.

Q: Who can use the Service?

A: Anyone who grew up in institutions or foster care in Victoria until 1989 and their immediate family members. All Forgotten Australians, wherever they grew up, are welcome at support groups and other functions.

Q: What's happened so far?

A: We've found a great stand alone building. It's in Richmond, close to three trams and two train stations.

Q: What will the Service do for me?

A: This will partly depend on what you want. We expect to provide personal support, help with records and family searches, counselling, social activities and support groups and opportunities to learn new skills. There will also be a fund which can be used to help with expenses for reunions and other specific needs. The Department of Human Services is working out the guidelines for this fund.

Q: But I live in the country. How will a Service based in Melbourne help me?

A: We will have a website and 1300 phone number. We'll also be travelling around Victoria to meet groups, work closely with support groups which are already established and help set up other groups as needed.

Q: Can I keep my existing counsellor?

A: Of course. We will also be developing guidelines and professional development to ensure all counsellors are properly qualified to assist you.

Q: How can I get involved?

A: We've established a project group to get the new Service up and running ASAP. We will also be meeting with different groups of Forgotten Australians over the next few months. We really want to hear from as many Forgotten Australians as possible so we can make sure we develop a service which best meets your needs. If you send your address (e-mail or home) we'll ensure you are on our communications list. See email list below.

Q: Does the new Service have a name?

A: We provisionally used "Open Place" in our tender. However we really would like other ideas. If you have any suggestions, it would be great if you could send it to Sandie at sdewolf@berrystreet.org.au

Q: What next?

A: We take possession of the building on 2 November. Although we won't have started the building works, please join us for afternoon tea on **Wednesday 4 November from 2.00pm to 3.30pm.** The address is Unit 1/8 Brougham Street, Richmond. Everyone is welcome.

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