

Media Release

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More support for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants

Page 1 of 3

Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants will today celebrate the third anniversary of the National Apology delivered to them in the Australian Parliament.

Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants will now have access to more personal support through the Australian Government's new Find and Connect support service to be delivered by Relationships Australia Tasmania, (RA Tas).

Relationships Australia is today marking the anniversary of the apology by officially launching the service in Tasmania.

RA Tas CEO, Mr Mat Rowell, said Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants can dial 1800 16 11 09 to get either phone or face-to-face support from specialist staff to search for information about their time in institutions, and trace their identities and lost families.

The 1800 number was chosen to remind people of the date on which the Australian Government delivered the National Apology.

Support from the Relationships Australia Find and Connect support service will include help with record searches, specialist counselling, and referral to other services, and follow-up support, including peer and social support.

The national Find and Connect support service complements other measures to help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants locate their personal files, piece together their past and, where possible, reunite with family members.

This includes the Find and Connect web resource, www.findandconnect.gov.au, a valuable resource that contains information about institutions, orphanages and children's Homes, to help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants start searching for records.

Relationships Australia Tasmania is celebrating the Apology anniversary with an afternoon tea at their Hobart office today, 16 November and will include the recently launched Alliance for Forgotten Australians DVD, *Forgotten Australians: Life Stories*.

This highly educational resource, produced by award-winning filmmaker, Clare Young and narrated by highly-acclaimed actor, Jack Thompson AO, depicts the lives of six Forgotten Australians who spent their childhoods in orphanages, institutions and other out-of-home 'care' in Australia in the last century.

For further information on the new Find and Connect support service or if you would like further information please contact the Find and Connect Senior Worker, Emma Ryan, on 1800 16 11 09.

Media inquiries please contact Mr Mat Rowell, CEO on 0439 370 256

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Who are the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants

More than 500,000 children who grew up in orphanages, foster care, children's Homes or other institutions in Australia from the 1920's to the 1980's are sometimes known as ***Forgotten Australians*** or ***Former Child Migrants***.

Over 7,000 of these children were deported, mostly from the United Kingdom and Malta, and were placed in charitable and religious institutions, often without their families' knowledge or consent. Many never saw their families again and lost their connection to their country and culture.

Children were placed in 'care' for a number of reasons, including family poverty, parental ill-health or breakdown in relationships. Some children, as young as several weeks old, were made wards of the state - not because they had done anything wrong, but because of the circumstances in which they and their parents found themselves.

Children experienced neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse during their time in 'care' and suffered from exploitation and mistreatment at the hands of the people who were responsible for looking after them.

The experiences of these children were documented in three important Senate reports:

- *Lost Innocents - Righting the Record* (2001)
- *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children* (2004)
- *Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians Revisited* (2009).

All three Senate Inquiries unanimously called for a national apology as a critical step in the healing process for those who have suffered, and who continue to suffer.



The National Apology

On 16 November 2009, in front of many hundreds of Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants in the Great Hall of Parliament House, the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP delivered the **National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants**. The Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, also spoke.

The Apology said sorry for what happened to many of these children – the loss of family, the loss of identity and, in the case of child migrants, the loss of their country.

The National Apology acknowledged that what happened in the past was both real and wrong. It ensured that a largely invisible part of Australia's history would be put firmly on the record for future generations to see and to make certain it would never happen again.

