

The logo for VANISH VOICE. 'VANISH' is in a teal, sans-serif font with a stylized purple bird-like graphic above the 'I'. 'VOICE' is in a large, black, serif font.

**Victorian Adoption Network
for Information and Self Help**

Winter 2017



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Apology Anniversary (*Heads Up!*)

Dear VANISH members and friends,

Welcome to this winter edition of VOICE. I hope you have been able to stay warm and well through the chilly season, we are all looking forward to spring!

It has been over six months since our last newsletter so we have lots of updates to share with you and a few events to tell you about, including our AGM on Thursday 21st September, a community workshop on DNA testing, another creative expression art therapy workshop, and our two day training for professionals. VANISH workers will be presenting at community forums around Victoria which are shown on the events page.

It has been a very busy and exciting time for VANISH. Firstly our new search service for people affected by donor conception (through VARTA) is fully operational. Secondly we have been through an Independent Review for accreditation against the Human Services Standards which VANISH passed with flying colours. This was no mean feat and I would like to congratulate the VANISH staff team and Committee of Management members for all the energy they invested into documenting and representing VANISH services.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Adam D'Arcy who joined us for four months as Quality and Compliance Officer and did a sterling job

supporting VANISH to achieve accreditation.

On the topic of the VANISH team I am pleased to tell you we have a new part-time Search and Support Worker, Julie Gomez. Julie previously worked as a Probate Genealogical Researcher at State Trustees and we are delighted to have her on board.

Since our last newsletter VANISH has undertaken a survey of members and service users which provided rich information and feedback from over 180 respondents. Thank you very much to everyone who took the time to do this survey, we are very grateful for your views and comments. Highlights are shared on pages 8 and 9.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of VOICE. Please remember that we love to receive contributions from our members and service users so if you have something to share, please send it through to us. Also, we also always welcome your feedback about our publications and services so if you have anything you would like to say to us please feel free to make contact with me. All contact details are on the back cover.

Warm regards,
Charlotte Smith, Manager

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY **1 day per week - North Melbourne** *(Preferably Monday or Friday)*

VANISH is seeking a Volunteer Administration Assistant to assist in the general operations of the Melbourne office. The role involves assisting the Manager and Administrator with photocopying, archiving/scanning, research, newsletter mail outs, website maintenance and event planning.

Key Requirements are:-

- Computer literacy (basic word, outlook and excel);
- Commitment to privacy and confidentiality;
- Basic research experience including using the internet;
- Interest in and respect for the post-adoption community;
- The ability to self-motivate and work independently; and
- Availability to work one day per week.

As a volunteer you can benefit through gaining experience of working in a unique specialist organisation; developing a deeper understanding of issues relating to having been adopted or separated from a child through adoption; attendance at VANISH events; and relevant in-service training. VANISH will reimburse reasonable travel expenses and provide a modest meal allowance.

If you would like to discuss this position further, please feel free to contact Karen or Charlotte at VANISH by telephone (03) 9328 8611 or email info@vanish.org.au.

VANISH Welcomes New Treasurer Simon Pryor

We are pleased to welcome new Treasurer Simon Pryor who joined the Committee of Management in April. Simon was CEO of the Mathematical Association of Victoria for 13 years and has a long history of experience in the Not-For-Profit sector, particularly working with finance teams. He has worked as an executive officer of professional, education, social enterprise and industry associations for over thirty five years and has provided consulting services to the not-for-profit sector including research and evaluations. He has been the Mayor of the City of Brunswick (1989) and he also has previous experience as a journalist, teacher, actor and tram conductor. Simon is an adopted person. He was reunited with his mother in 1998 and then, with the help of VANISH, made contact with members of his father's family in 2007 and is still in the process of building relationships with his siblings, cousins, and other family members in Australia, New Zealand, Crete, Ireland and Scotland.



Update: Review of the *Adoption Act 1984*

VANISH was pleased that a review of Victoria's *Adoption Act 1984* was initiated by the Attorney-General in December 2015, as we had long advocated for the 33-year-old Act and related policies to be overhauled. However, we were disappointed that the terms of reference specifically excluded consideration of intercountry adoption; surrogacy; the permanency amendments to the *Children Youth and Families Act* effective from March 2016; and whether the practice of adoption should continue given it involves cancelling and replacing a child's birth certificate.

VANISH was also disappointed with only five weeks being scheduled for sharing, digesting, discussing and responding to the substantial Consultation Paper – patently inadequate given the complexities of the issues involved. We requested this timeframe be extended but we were advised this could not happen due to time required for any legislation to go through Parliament this term.

The Commission's final report was released in June. It is a weighty document comprising 358 pages and 88 recommendations, referring extensively to the 61 written submissions received, and the 38 consultations conducted, during its review.

VANISH has closely reviewed the report and recommendations. We are pleased to see that the lifelong and intergenerational impacts of separation and adoption are reflected throughout the report. We are also pleased that 47 of the recommendations are wholly consistent with the recommendations that VANISH made or our stated positions, and a further 28 recommendations are acceptable to VANISH. We have no view on one of the recommendations.

However, we are opposed to 12 of the report's recommendations. These include those that relate to changing an adoptee's name and birth certificate; the nature of the counselling and legal assistance provided to adults considering relinquishment of their child for adoption; the circumstances in which parents' consent can be dispensed with; eligibility requirements for prospective adoptive parents; and the circumstances in which a person or permanent carer known to the child can adopt them.

The Commission's most significant recommendation – with which VANISH agrees – is that the *Adoption Act 1984* should be replaced with an entirely new Act, rather than making further piecemeal amendments to the existing, and already unwieldy, Act. Unfortunately, during a meeting called by the Minister for Families, Children and Youth, Jenny Mikakos, on 29 July 2017 VANISH was informed that the Government it plans to take it's time to consider the Commission's

recommendations so it appears unlikely that the Government will initiate work on a new Act during its current term of office.

However, also during that meeting, the Minister advised she would investigate making changes that require no legislative amendment – for example, to remove BMI and age criteria in the assessment requirements for adoptive parent applicants.

On behalf of the many Victorians currently affected by the *Adoption Act*, VANISH is disappointed with this response. The Government gave the Commission a very tight timeline in which to complete its review, and many expectations have been raised through the process and the recommendations in the report. The Government now expresses no urgency for legislative change to better meet the identity, information and/or contact needs of the thousands of adoptees, natural parents and other family members affected by the Act.

The Government's apparent focus on promoting the interests of a relatively small number of potential adoptive parents is frustratingly out of step with the gist of the Commission's recommendations, given the ongoing discrimination against natural parents and adopted people that is inherent in Victoria's current legislation, policies and practices.

VANISH will provide updates on further developments regarding the review in our next news bulletin.

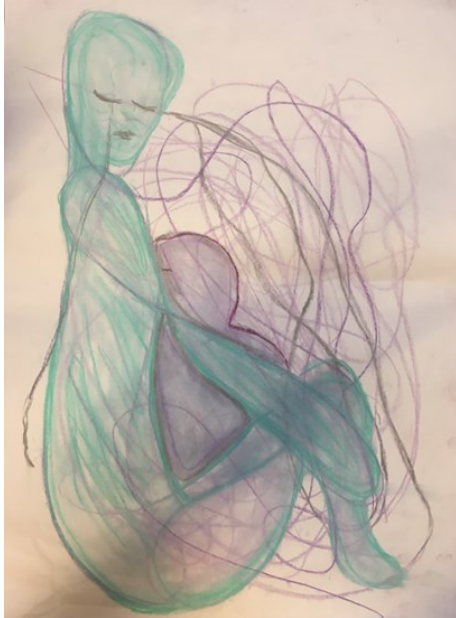
Search Service for People Affected by Donor Conception

Since March this year VANISH has been undertaking searches on behalf of people affected by donor conception through an agreement with the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA). This involves VARTA referring searches to VANISH and the results being provided to VARTA so that an outreach can be made, in line with new legislation. Searches for pre-1998 donors have a short timeframe due to the Act providing for identifying information to be released four months after the application is made.

At the end of June VARTA had referred 56 **searches** to VANISH and 46 results were returned with the remaining searches still underway. VARTA and the Department of Health and Human Services have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the timely and accurate service VANISH provides. Having advocated on behalf of the community for over two decades VANISH is pleased to be able to provide this service. We are now in the process of establishing a way to support individuals directly where further search work is required.

Report on the Creative Expression Workshop (Art Therapy) with Michele Hutchins

In April VANISH ran a Creative Expression program for adult adoptees. Each Friday for six weeks participants came together from 10.30am – 2pm, dedicating time to self-care, mindfulness practices and the use of creativity for self-exploration, with a particular focus on issues relating to their adoption experience.



The facilitator, Michele Hutchins, combined her art therapy training with 20 years of mindfulness and meditation practices to design a unique program for adoptees. Informed by her own experience as an adoptee, Michele is passionate about delivering programs to target the complex needs of people affected by adoption.

The participant feedback was very positive (see below) and VANISH is offering another program in October and November. Expressions of interest are invited for this six week program which will be either specifically for adoptees, or specifically for mothers separated from a child through adoption. To find out more or to register your interest please contact Karen on 9328 8611 or email info@vanish.org.au.

Art therapy is especially effective in working with people or communities who have experienced trauma. An Art Therapist provides a variety of art materials and a safe space for participants to create without judgment. The creative process offers profound access to feelings and memories that cannot always be expressed in words.

These sessions are designed to include elements of fun through movement, music and play whilst also delving deep with creative and reflective works. Great care is taken to create a nurturing and safe environment and all activities are undertaken with a healing intention.

The opportunity to come together with others who have had similar experiences can be a very powerful and the creative process can often feel exhilarating and liberating. However, participants should also be prepared for those times which might require sitting with uncomfortable or painful feelings or memories. You may wish to consider concurrent professional support.

No artistic skill, ability or experience is required. In fact, having little or no artistic training can be an advantage as it frees you up from rules and expectations about how artwork should be created. In Art Therapy there is no right or wrong way to make art, and the focus is not on the product. Art can be used as a metaphor, a sensory representation, or a concrete symbol of a feeling or goal. As one of the participants says, “you will be amazed.”

The program was very well received and the wonderful feedback included the following comments:

“The work with clay was amazing for me and brought out a very interesting perspective on things.”

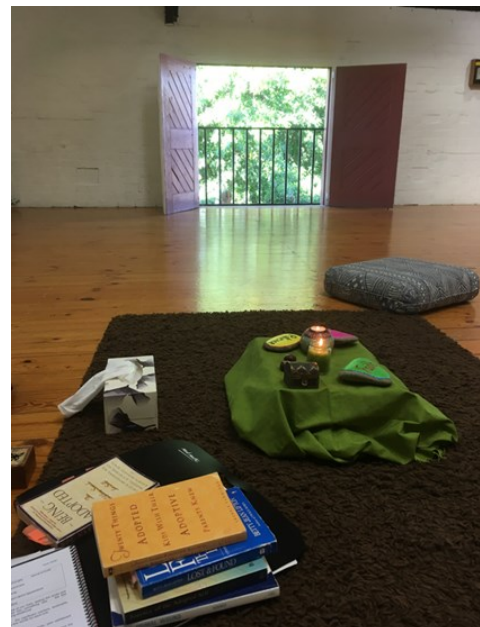
“Writing a letter to yourself/younger self was very useful.”

“Best therapy I have experienced & continue at home.”

“The facilitator’s flexibility in meeting the participants where they are on that day is really appreciated and highly appropriate I feel.”

“Michele was sensitive and skillful as usual.”

“Thoroughly enjoyable and beneficial once again!”



Were there aspects of the program that you found particularly beneficial?

“Meditation, group discussion, exploration in a safe environment with like-minded people.”

“I had no prior experience with art therapy and I enjoyed all the exercises, as well as the writing reflections afterwards.”

What would you say to other adoptees considering attending a Creative Expressive Program?

"Very worthwhile. You will be amazed. Just do it."

"I would say it's a very in-depth and powerful tool and you need a lot of time post session to digest."

"I would highly recommend it, but I would also recommend concurrent support / self-care, particularly for adoptees new to this journey."

Is there any other feedback you would like to give or any further comment about your experience?

"Fantastic. Thank you Michele. You are incredible. I feel like I have done more self healing in 6 sessions than I have in 10 years."

VANISH would like to thank the participants for generously sharing these photographs of their 'work'. If you would like to know more about the upcoming Creative Expression (Art Therapy) Course please see the advert on page 11.



Creative Expression - a Participants Perspective

This piece was written by one of the participants of the Creative Expression workshop halfway through the course.

I had no idea what I was getting myself in for when I said "Yes. I'd like to do that art thingy" and before I knew it, I had committed myself and the dates and time were set – I was in. On the morning I told my family I was doing an art course and hopefully after the six weeks, I would have something half decent to put up on one of our walls – well, maybe.

The morning was glorious when I got off at Parliament station, walked through Treasury Gardens, treated myself to breakfast and continued walking briskly toward Coppin Street, Richmond. I ended up jumping on a tram because I didn't want to be late and I wasn't exactly sure where it was.

***"You laugh, you cry, you feel free,
you feel safe and all the while being
gently cared for and guided by the
wonderful and experienced Michele."***

As soon as I got there and found the right space, upstairs at the stables, I started to realise it wasn't just about art. There was a beautiful aromatic candle burning, cushions arranged in a circle and an ambiance of light (there are lots of windows, it was a very sunny day and the walls are painted white!) and peace. I was greeted by the lovely Michele and immediately offered a cuppa. We went in to the kitchen and Michele had brought everything – different teas, coffee, biscuits, nuts etc. We decided that a nice thing to do would be to bring one of our favourite mugs each week. I soon learned that this experience was going to be all about comfort and nurturing ourselves – something us adopted folk need truckloads of!

I soon met the other two beautiful participants and we quickly formed a comfortable presence with each other. After all, we are all adopted, all detached from our birth mothers as babies and all deeply affected by this experience. We sat in a circle around the beautiful candle and spoke gently about ourselves. Immediately I felt connected (and this is something which I haven't felt) as I have never been with other 'adopted' people before. I was in 'Art Therapy'; I must have missed the word 'therapy' when I read the ad and was eager to sign up. We listened to some beautiful music, I provided the music for the second week and another participant provided the most beautiful classical music for our third week.



We relax in meditation (just get comfortable and have a snooze if you like!) and of course we then do some art. By this time you feel relaxed, nurtured and ready to explore your feelings and thoughts using various art materials supplied. You laugh, you cry, you feel free, you feel safe and all the while being gently cared for and guided by the wonderful and experienced Michele. I'm halfway through and can't wait for Fridays. I enjoy the train ride there, the walk and then especially the journey home as somehow I feel a little more 'at home'.

'Cherished Mother and Child' Memorial - Sale



An important and quite historic unveiling occurred in Victoria Park, Marley Street, Sale on 17 March 2017 to commemorate the 2012 Victorian and 2013 National apologies.

The bronze artwork unveiled is titled 'Cherished Mother and Child'. It was sculpted by Melbourne artist Andrew Poppleton and cast by Meridian Sculptures. It depicts a mother looking lovingly upon her newborn child, representing their eternal bond and honouring what was taken from them through unethical and often illegal practices of the past. The statue is placed on the edge of the park in a peaceful floral garden setting with surrounding seating - a place for people to reflect and contemplate the impact of these practices on family relationships.

"Andrew has captured the meaning of the apologies with a mother's face of unconditional love only a mother has for her newborn and the sacred bond only mother and child can share – a reflection of what should have been – instead of empty arms, broken hearts, spirits and shattered lives – betrayal of both mother and child's human rights – with their needs dependent on the continuity of their union and their rights to the integrity of their post birth union – a special place of recognition for one's own private thoughts in peaceful contemplation, healing and solace."
Brenda Coughlan.

This solemn occasion was attended by Brenda Coughlan, spokesperson for the Independent Regional Mothers (IRM), the organisation which arranged for the statue and event together with Wellington Shire Council. IRM have long advocated and lobbied for those responsible for the unethical and unlawful removal of newborn babies to be held accountable. In her speech Brenda described the statue "as a timely reminder of the injustices of the past and a reflection of what should have been."

The statue was unveiled by The Hon Darren Chester MP Federal Member of Gippsland following a moving ceremony where speeches were delivered by The Hon. Darren Chester, Cr. Darren McCubbin, former Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu, former Victorian Deputy Premier Peter Ryan and Brenda. In attendance were MP Melina Bath, MP Danny O'Brien, Councillors Gail Maher and Keith Mills, representatives from Wellington Shire Council and the other five Gippsland Shire Councils including Bass Coast Mayor Pamela Rothfield.

Also in attendance were mothers, adoptees, family members, members of the public, church ministers and representatives the Department of Health and Human Services, VANISH and the media. Before her speech Brenda remembered with love the late Senator Judith Adams and also those whose grief and trauma took them too early from their families.

Following the unveiling, single roses were thoughtfully provided by the Independent Regional Mothers for those individuals who wished to place one on the flowerbed to honour the loss and grief they experienced. The event was followed by refreshments across the park in the historic Debridge Hall, St Paul's Cathedral, where people acknowledged personal experiences in a supportive environment.



Former MPs Peter Ryan and Ted Baillieu, current MP Darren Chester and mothers Dorothy, Janet, June, Brenda, Lyn and Jo.

The Plaque under the statue contains these words:

CHERISHED

MOTHER AND CHILD

OFFICIALLY UNVEILED BY
HON DARREN CHESTER MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR GIPPSLAND

ON BEHALF OF INDEPENDENT REGIONAL MOTHERS ON
17 MARCH 2017

To commemorate Prime Minister Julia Gillard's National
Parliamentary Apology on 21 March 2013

*"Today this Parliament on behalf of the Australian people takes
responsibility and apologises for the forced separations of mothers
from their babies that caused a life long legacy of pain and
suffering—betrayal by a system that gave you no choice."*

And Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu and Deputy Premier Peter
Ryan's Parliamentary apologies on 25 October 2012

"You were and are not to blame. It was not your fault."



Farewell Brendon Carroll from FIND

Last week we were sorry to say farewell to Brendon Carroll as he retires from Family Information Networks and Discovery (FIND). Brendon has worked with the Department for over 30 years, which is a significant contribution to the sector. Some of the VANISH team members here have been interacting with Brendon for over ten years and we have all appreciated his knowledge, commitment and professionalism and would like to wish him a wonderful retirement.

New Resource about 'Care Leavers'



A new information package has been launched by the national Department of Health to inform, advise and support those who deliver aged care for people who spent time in institutional care or out-of-home care, including orphanages and foster care. The resource provides information about

Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and Stolen Generations and some of the emotional or physical issues they might have when seeking aged care services. The information package was launched by The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health in December 2016. "This new resource will help aged care providers better understand the issues faced by these groups and deepen the cultural and aged care service capabilities of these organisations," Minister Wyatt said.



Brendon Carroll being presented a stylish set of pens by Angela Karavidas, Manager of FIND.

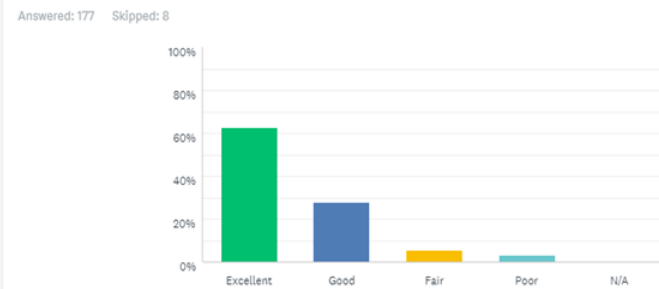
Service User Survey Feedback

Earlier this year VANISH undertook a survey to find out from members and service users what they thought of our services. Over 180 respondents completed the survey either online or by post. Below are some of the results taken from a summary report by Quality and Compliance Officer Adam D'Arcy.

Overall Performance

Overwhelmingly (90%) rated the quality of VANISH's services as either excellent or good.

Overall how would you rate the quality of VANISH's services?



Respondents rated the extent to which their needs were met almost as highly, with 87% as excellent or good, and 91% rated the workers as either excellent or good in terms of being respectful in their interactions with service users.

The respondents then went on to positively reflect the work of VANISH's team, rating them consistently high as either excellent or good in categories such as being respectful to individual circumstances (90%), being able to 'hear' or understand the feelings of the service user (89%), involving the service user in the search process (92%) and the level of support provided to service users (93%)

Search & Support

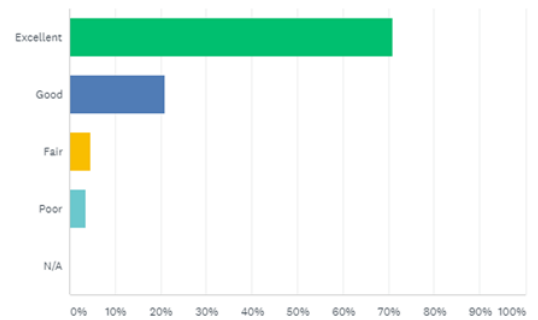
For those who had utilised VANISH search services both general and specific feedback repeatedly highlighted not only the high quality of work that VANISH does but also identified VANISH's role in supporting people through their process as highly valued and often made a significant difference in their lives. Useful feedback was received about where improvements could be made including keeping service users more regularly informed about how their searches were progressing.

Of the two thirds of people who accessed support through VANISH, 92% rated this support as either excellent or good.

Suggestions for improvement included increasing staff, increasing counselling services, increasing time allocated for each person, and for a service user to be able to be in contact with the same worker each time.

How would you rate the support given by VANISH?

Answered: 110 Skipped: 75



Counselling

Of the people who utilised the counselling services, 86% of respondents rated the experience as excellent or good. A significant number of people identified being supported and being heard by a supportive and understanding professional as the most positive outcome. Other positive outcomes identified were being able to access good information, that respondents were able to reach a positive outcome from the experience and valuing the skillset of the counsellor.

Support Groups

Of the people who had attended support groups a large proportion (82%) rated their experience as excellent or good. Disproportionately, the most common positive experience was that the people attending felt that they were able to be somewhere where they didn't feel alone and were able to find people with a shared experience to their own as well as being able to hear from, and understand, the perspectives of others whose experience was different to their own. Some suggestions for improving the support groups were to expand regional support groups, look at better advertising with more advance notice and perhaps run specialised tailored support groups for specific needs.

General Comments and Conclusion

When asked to give general comments about VANISH, respondents overwhelmingly talked about what a positive experience VANISH had been for them. Others talked positively about the skills of the staff/organisation. There were also a few comments about VANISH not being able to meet individual needs.

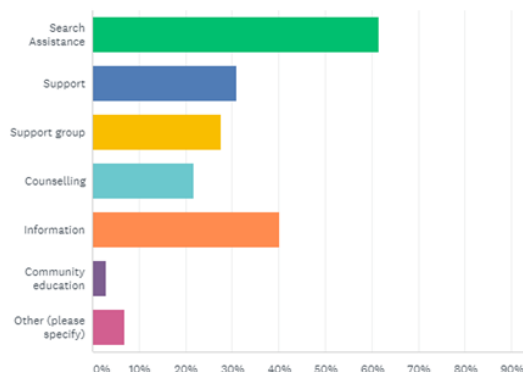
The results of the survey reflect the constant stream of compliments and thanks VANISH workers receive. The criticisms and suggestions for improvement are extremely helpful for VANISH to consider in terms of managing expectations, reviewing communication protocols, resourcing decisions, and managing complaints. VANISH will undertake a more detailed

review of the survey feedback and consider strategies for further improvements to service delivery.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to share your thoughts and ideas with us. You are welcome to provide further feedback through our online feedback form or by writing to the Manager.

Which of the following VANISH services have you used?

Answered: 174 Skipped: 11



An event for Mothers

ARMS (Vic) WARMLY INVITES YOU TO A
SELF-HEALING EVENT
SATURDAY, 23rd SEPTEMBER
10 am – 4.30 pm
Treacey Centre, 126 The Avenue, Parkville VIC 3052



A day of working through our feelings and thoughts will include a guest speaker on dealing with loss and workshops on music/art therapy (no skills required!).

We hope that our regional members will take advantage of an inclusive travel allowance and join us - we don't get to see you very often!

Places strictly limited to 30, so please RSVP BY 1/9/17
phone ARMS mobile 0400 701 621 ~ Jo's mobile 0409 442 701
email arms@armsvic.org.au.

This event has been made possible through a grant from Relationships Australia, Victoria and Compass Forced Adoption Support Services



Adoptees Round Table Think Tank (ARTTT) Warburton, Victoria

Organised by the ARTTT planning committee and auspices by EACH Ringwood www.each.com.au

On the 3rd and 4th June, a group of Australian adult adoptees came together from all over Australia to discuss their concerns about past, current and future adoption practices. Many of the participants had worked together and discussed adoption issues at length with each other online but never met face to face. Over the two days, the group of 25 people workshopped issues including adoption sensitive language, birth certificates, stewardship laws, discharge laws, DNA testing, services adoptees need, the different approaches required for male and female adoptees, and the formation of an Australia-wide organisation. As a result of these discussions, the group has decided to establish a national body in order to give a public voice to adopted people. A working party was formed to do the ground work, develop the constitution and incorporation of the National Association then to hold an election of the board and office bearers with the aim of having the National Association up and running early next year.

For more information please contact William Hammersley, Coordinator of the ARTTT planning committee williamhhh52@gmail.co

The VANISH staff team is:-

Charlotte Smith, Manager

Elizabeth Tomlinson, Counsellor and Search & Support Coordinator

Mary Rawson, Maire Peckett, Gail Holstock, Sally Rose Carbines and Julie Gomez, Search & Support Workers

Karen Francis, Receptionist/Administrator

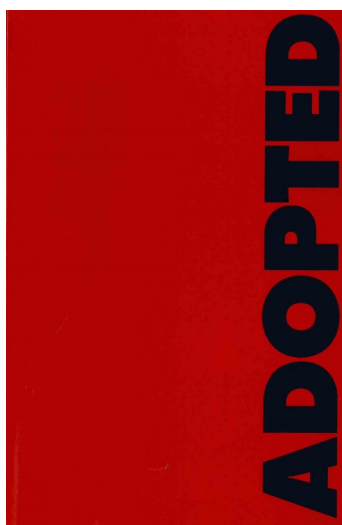
Myra Krafft, Communications Assistant (Volunteer)

Barbara Burns, Accountant (Volunteer)

NEW BOOKS IN OUR LIBRARY

ADOPTED

by Diana Dunning, Sofie Gregory, Rebecca Johnston and Melinda Rackham



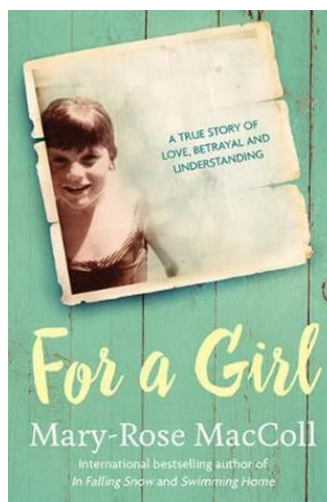
ADOPTED is a new collection of poetry and prose published by adoptee advocacy and peer support group IdentityRites in South Australia. "Four dynamic writers unearth the ongoing effects of their adoption through poetry and prose. This anthology presents rarely heard, authentic adoptee perspectives on trauma, loss and reclaiming identity" The authors are Diana Dunning, Sofie Gregory, Rebecca Johnston

and Melinda Rackham. Copies of **ADOPTED** are currently available free of charge by sending a B5 (176 x 250 mm) stamped, self-addressed envelope to Sofie Gregory, 196 Goodwood Road, MILLSWOOD, SA 5034. Please put \$3.00 worth of stamps on the envelope to cover the cost of postage. **ADOPTED** can also be borrowed from the VANISH Library or through the regional support groups.

More information about IdentityRites www.identityrites.org/
Review by Thomas Graham in Ipsify www.ipsify.com/adopted/

For a Girl: A True Story of Secrets, Motherhood and Hope

Mary-Rose MacColl



Emerging from an unconventional, boisterously happy childhood, Mary-Rose MacColl was a rebellious teenager. And when, at the age of fifteen, her high-school teacher and her husband started inviting Mary-Rose to spend time with them, her parents were pleased that she now had the guidance she needed to take her safely into young adulthood.

It wasn't too long, though, before the teacher and her husband changed the nature of the relationship with overwhelming consequences for Mary-Rose. Consequences that kept her silent and ashamed through much of her adult life. Many years later, safe within a loving relationship, all of the long-hidden secrets and betrayals crashed down upon her and she came close to losing everything.

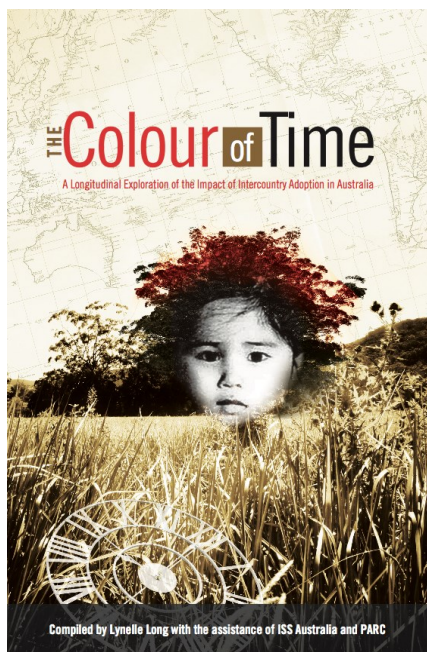
In this poignant and brave true story, Mary-Rose brings these secrets to the surface and, in doing so, is finally able to watch them float away.

Review taken from Readings

The Colour of Time: A Longitudinal Exploration of the Impact of Intercountry Adoption in Australia

Compiled by Lynelle Long with the assistance of ISS Australia and PARC

The Colour of Time was released on 26 June 2017. This is the sequel to *The Colour of Difference: Journeys in Transracial Adoption* by Federation Press, 2001.



Intercountry adoption in Australia has been an ongoing occurrence since the late 1960s but most of the current literature fails to investigate the long term impacts of adoption past late adolescence. The questions remain, how do these children fare in adulthood? What impact has adoption had from late adolescence, to early adulthood, then middle adulthood and beyond? And how does this compare to the journey of a younger generation of intercountry adoptees?

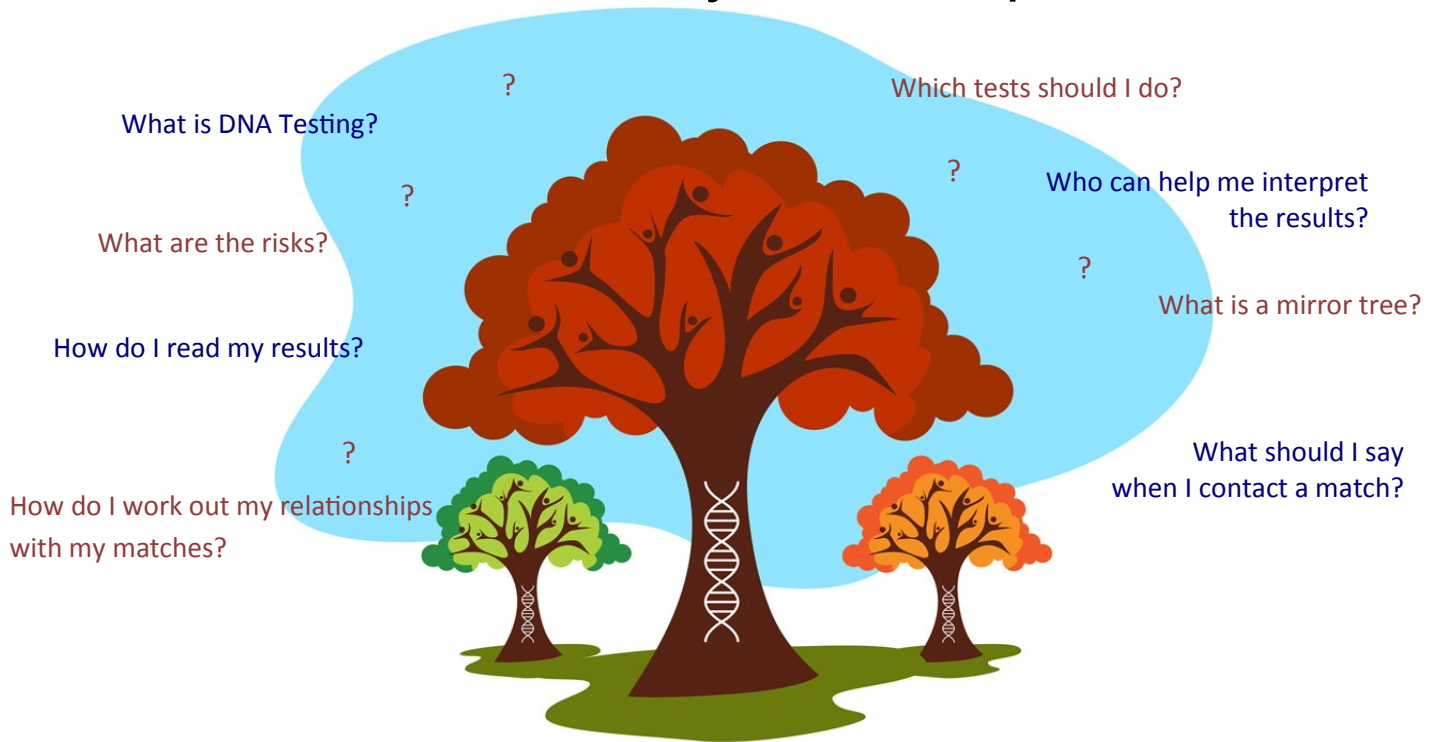
The aim of this sequel is to revisit stories from the original contributors in *The Colour of Difference*, to share the experiences from a new generation of Australian intercountry adoptees, and to informally compare their journeys. Included are 28 stories, each one an honest account of an adoptee's life. They are poignant, stirring, emotive, and sometimes haunting. Our contributors share their experiences in coming to terms with where they came from, how their adoption has shaped their sense of identity, and their journey of acceptance, with all its complexities, truths and wonders.

Themes such as cultural integration, racial identity, search and reunion, and parenthood are explored across different generations. *The Colour of Time* is a must-read for anyone affected by adoption.

Information provided by InterCountry Adoptee Voices (ICAV)

Searching for Relatives using DNA Testing

Community Workshop



10am to 4pm Saturday 23rd September

Genealogical Society of Victoria

Level 6, 85 Queen St, Melbourne

Louise Coakley

Genetic Genealogist and convenor of *Using DNA for Genealogy - Australia & NZ* and the DNA Drop-In Clinic at Cairns Family History Society. Louise holds a Certificate of Genealogical Research specialises in assisting people to use DNA to search for biological relatives.

Damian Adams

Medical research scientist currently investigating Regenerative Medicine and conducting a PhD at Flinders University into outcomes for donor conceived people. Published articles include Building a Family Tree: Donor-Conceived People and DNA Tracing and Donor 'Anonymity'

Limited places available. For info and bookings contact info@vanish.org.au

Invitation

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 21st September

5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm start

Guest Speakers: Louise Coakley and Damian Adams

Searching for Relatives using DNA Testing

How and why DNA testing is solving 'impossible' searches

Followed by Refreshments and Conversation

Where

Centre for Excellence in Child & Family Welfare

Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne

(near cnr Flinders Lane and Market Street)

Please **RSVP** by

Thursday 14th September

03 9328 8611 or 1300 826 474

or email info@vanish.org.au

VANISH Committee of Management Vacancies

The Committee of Management comprises people who have personal experience of separation from a child through adoption, being adopted (domestic or intercountry), state wardship or donor conception and who wish to be involved in the governance and leadership of VANISH.

The function of the COM includes strategic planning, ensuring resources for the ongoing work of VANISH, monitoring the performance of the organisation, ensuring the policies and procedures comply with legal and accounting requirements, and overseeing the Manager.

COM members are expected to attend ten meetings a year, on the fourth Wednesday evening of every month except December. The time commitment over the course of the year is estimated to be about 30 hours, with optional additional hours for participating in working groups.

If you have personal experience as described above; possess relevant Board/Committee skills and experience and/or have a relevant skill set that will support VANISH to achieve its purpose and objectives; are aligned with VANISH values and policy positions; and are able to commit to contributing to the governance and leadership of the organisation, and you are interested in joining the COM please contact the Manager, Charlotte Smith on (03) 9328 8611 or email manager@vanish.org.au.

Committee of Management members are required to undergo a police and referee check prior to appointment.

Nominations must be delivered or posted to the Secretary at the VANISH office to be received no later than 4.30pm on Thursday 7th September 2017.

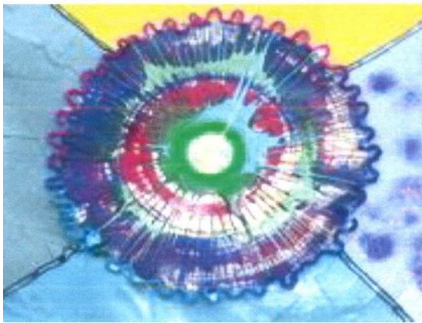
DATES TO REMEMBER

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - ART THERAPY

Creative Expression Course for Adoptees or Mothers

A six week Art Therapy course in October and November 2017

with **Michele Hutchins**



To register your interest or find out more, please call 9328 8611 or email info@vanish.org.au

If you wish to speak to Michele or ask her questions, we will be happy to put you in touch with her.



This course is supported with small grant funding from Relationships Australia Victoria's Compass Forced Adoption Support Services, funded by the Australia Government Department of Social Services.



TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

One or two day training for counsellors and other professionals



16 and 17 November 2017

Working with Loss and Trauma Related to Past and Forced Adoption Practices

Day One: Supporting individuals affected by past and forced adoption practices. Designed for all professionals in the health and community sectors

Day Two: Counselling individuals affected by past and forced adoption practices. Designed for Counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers and psychologists (day one is a prerequisite for day two)

Completion of the two day training will mean that eligible professionals can apply to be on the VANISH Register of Post-Adoption Counsellors.

Cost: One day \$95, Two days \$175 including GST and manual.

This course and manual is subsidised by VANISH Inc.

To book or for more information please contact Karen by telephone on 03 9328 8611 or email karen@vanish.org.au

DATES TO REMEMBER

VANISH SUPPORT GROUP DATES 2017

Below are the remaining Support Group dates for 2017.
There is no need to RSVP— just turn up.

METROPOLITAN

Level 1, 50 Howard Street, North Melbourne
(7.30 to 9.30pm)

Mixed

12th Sept, 10th Oct, 14th Nov, 12th Dec

Adopted Persons Only

26th Sept, 24th Oct, 28th Nov

Donor Conceived

28th Sept, 30th Nov

ALBURY-WODONGA

Mother Only 14th October

Adopted Persons Only 11th November

Mixed Group 9th September, 9th December

BALLARAT

Mother Only 16th September, 16th December

Adopted Persons Only 18th November

Mixed Group 21st October

BENDIGO

Mother Only 9th September, 11th November

Adopted Persons Only 14th October, 9th December

MILDURA

Mother Only 18th November

Adopted Persons Only 16th September, 16th December

Mixed Group 21st October

TRARALGON

Mother Only 16th September, 16th December

Adopted Persons Only 21st October

Mixed Group 18th November

VANISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 21st September 2017

5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm start

For further details please see newsletter insert

Toora & District Family History Group South Gippsland

Open Days 10am - 4pm
Sat 26th and Sun 27th August 2017

Local History display

Hands on workshops to learn how to research

Snake Island & the cattlemen

Adoptions & Missing Family Members

The Timber industry & Shipwrecks in Corner Inlet

Hydro electricity for Toora in early 1900.

Researching Properties from Settlement Days

Presentation by VANISH
on Saturday 26th August

Toora Community Hall, Gray Street, Toora

Contact Meryl: colmera@skymesh.com.au

Heads Up!

Fifth Anniversary of State Apology

This October the fifth anniversary of the Victorian Parliamentary Apology for Past Adoption Practices will be commemorated with a special event organised by ARMS Victoria and Origins Victoria.

Currently it is planned that it will be held in one of Melbourne's public gardens.

The date will be announced once availability has been confirmed. Please check our website or Facebook page, or contact us if you wish to be informed once plans are finalised.



Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help

1st Floor, 50 Howard Street, North Melbourne 3051

P.O. Box 112, Carlton South 3053

ABN 35 582 901 627

www.vanish.org.au

Ph: (03) 9328 8611

Fax: (03) 9329 6527

info@vanish.org.au