

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 38 | SEPTEMBER 2021

OPEN PLACE

Support Service for Forgotten Australians

Relationships Australia  
VICTORIA

## A message from Michelle McDonald, Senior Manager Open Place.

Dear all,

Welcome to all our new Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers who have registered with Open Place. We look forward to lockdown-free times ahead when we can resume face to face services, Drop In, outreach and groups, and hopefully meet some of you!

I acknowledge the passing of some of our service users at a time when individuals and groups have been unable to gather to remember their friend or family and mourn their passing. Our thoughts go out to all who have been impacted during these challenging times.

Sadly, we find ourselves in lockdown number six as this goes to press.

Having ended 2020 with Social Support Groups (SSGs) returning for an end-of-year group and restarting in 2021, the year hasn't proceeded as we had all hoped. We were able to open Drop In earlier in the year and resume some activities with plans for some new ones but the ongoing COVID-19 spread has meant that our face to face services have been interrupted and paused again.

Vaccination has been identified as our way out of lockdowns. Please talk with your doctor or a medical person should you have any questions or concerns about vaccination.

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## We're going green

As you know, this newsletter is sent by snail mail to reach all our valued service users, stakeholders, funding bodies and members of the public. We're continuing to print and send the newsletter by post, but we'd like to send it by email to anyone who is happy to receive it.

If you'd like to help the environment and get the newsletter as quickly as possible by email, just let us know.

1800 779 379 | [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au) | [openplace.org.au](http://openplace.org.au)

If you are seeking vaccination, the government website provides a booking service online or by phone – details can be found at [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment)

**For those of you who may be affected by COVID-19**, for example, being in a hotspot at some point in time and/or needing to quarantine, details of **financial and other support available** can be found at [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/financial-and-other-support-coronavirus-covid-19?#extreme-hardship-support-program](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/financial-and-other-support-coronavirus-covid-19?#extreme-hardship-support-program)

We currently have over 2,000 people on the mailing list for newsletters and as you can imagine copying the newsletter and preparing for the mailout is a huge job. With COVID-19 restrictions it's not possible to complete this task in a safe and timely manner, so we are encouraging anyone with an email address to send it to reception at [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au) and receive the newsletter via email. All newsletters also go on our website [www.openplace.org.au/whats-on-latest-news](http://www.openplace.org.au/whats-on-latest-news)

During the year we farewelled one of our long-serving team members - David Hartmann who headed the Counselling and National Redress Support team, and prior to this the Royal Commission team, as well as being involved in numerous SSGs over the time. David has retired to enjoy grandparenting and travel (once our borders are open again and people are free to travel around Australia). You can read a bit more about David on page 7.

Around the same time, one of our long-term experienced and compassionate external counsellors, Alex Agius, passed away suddenly. Alex had been involved with Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers long before Open Place began and was a Forgotten Australian himself. He will be missed by many and his story will be written as part of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians Life Story project and uploaded onto the website once completed.

Most recently, we welcomed Cameron Boyd to the team in the Coordinator of Counselling and Redress Support role, Regina Bremen as the new Assistant Manager, Kate Derrig to the counselling team and Brigitte Mathot to the reception/front desk role.

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) has committed to a much-overdue revamp of the Open Place website. With COVID-19 restrictions and requirements, this may not take place until late-next-year. In the meantime, we are keen to hear from you with any ideas about how we can improve the website for you. Please email any ideas to [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au) or phone Brigitte on reception with your thoughts/ideas.

Between lockdowns I attended the launch, with Anastasia Panayiotidis (General Manager Clinical Services RAV), of a fabulous new service of the Victorian Branch of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The service is called Memory Lane and is a no-cost service that will support patients in end of life care (with a terminal illness or in palliative care) to visit a place that holds meaning for them - an opportunity to visit a place of personal significance; to admire their own garden, to feel the breeze of the seaside, or to be surrounded by their loved ones and pets. The service is staffed by medically-trained healthcare professionals who volunteer their time, and two vehicles have been modified for the service. Visit <https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/what-we-do/memory-lane> for more information or contact the co-ordinated support team to assist you in accessing the service.

By the time you read this newsletter, Spring will have arrived. I hope you have enjoyed some of the late winter, with early spring blooms providing some colours to our landscape.

We look forward to resuming face to face services as soon as we can safely do so, in the meantime we will continue to work remotely and via phone, email or Zoom. Stay in touch and stay safe.

Michelle

## Open Place Christmas Party

Due to the uncertainty of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and the unlikelihood that the Malvern Town Hall will be able to allow full capacity numbers to be held on the day, it is with regret that we have made the difficult decision that **the Open Place Christmas Party will not proceed again this year**. However, we do hope to catch up with at least some of you at any SSGs that we are able to run before Christmas.

## News from the Alliance for Forgotten Australians

Produced by the Alliance for Forgotten Australians, *Open Doors* is a one-take film following Forgotten Australian Bill (Don Bridges) who lived in an orphanage, unloved and uncared for, for many years. Bill thought he'd left that world behind, but at 80, he's facing that life all over again. We are anticipating that *Open Doors* will be released in the next couple of months.

On 23 June 2021, the Australian Government released the second anniversary review of the National Redress Scheme, and its response to the review's recommendations. You can read more at <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/about/second-anniversary-review>

One recommendation of interest is that the government may provide advance payments of \$10,000 to eligible survivors born before 1944, or 1964 for applicants who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and those with terminal illnesses. The Scheme will adjust gross redress payments for these survivors by a corresponding amount. Advance payments would support elderly or terminally ill applicants to receive some early acknowledgment of the trauma they experienced as children.

## National Roundtable

**Promoting a national discussion on improved models of aged and community care for people who were in out-of-home care during childhood.**

*The National Roundtable* on Aged and Community Care for Forgotten Australians continues to meet monthly (via Zoom) to discuss and share how aged care services can be tailored and improved to ensure that Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers gain better access and more appropriate services as they age. The Roundtable commenced in 2019 after a successful forum on Aged and Community Care at Wattle Place in Sydney. Membership includes Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers, specialist service providers, mainstream aged care providers, researchers, and individuals - all passionate to ensure that aged and community services are more individualised, responsive, and of the highest possible quality. Open Place has been part of the Roundtable since mid-2020. Recent discussions have included the impact of Redress payments on aged care entitlements; the Aged Care Royal Commission; aged care reform; and presentations by researchers and academics such as Adele Chynoweth and Dee Michell. The National Roundtable is convened by Anne Livingstone of Global Community Resourcing. For further information please contact Anne at [anne@communityresourcing.com.au](mailto:anne@communityresourcing.com.au)

(Source: The Tuart Times, Issue 21, May 2021)

## Were you at... Pleasant Creek?

**Bill** was at Pleasant Creek and is happy to talk with anyone who was there also. Please contact Diane at Open Place on 1800 779 379 who will put you in touch.

## 2021-2022 Health Guidelines

This document outlines guidelines in relation to the brokerage funding you may choose to access during the 2021-22 financial year (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022).

Please note, the funding provided by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to support the needs of Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers is limited. Open Place currently has over 4,000 registered Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers able to access its suite of services, including brokerage. If the demand for brokerage exceeds the funding provided by DFFH, Open Place may be required to revise these guidelines and/or prioritise funding according to need.

In the 2021-22 financial year, you may access up to:

- **\$1,250 for health**
- **\$250 for medical transport and accommodation (regional and rural service users only).**

If required, you may also access \$1,000 (for dental treatments (eligibility criteria apply)). Please contact the Health Brokerage team for eligibility criteria information.

Funding Type	Health
Who may access	Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers
Limit each financial year	\$1,250
Eligible expenses	<p><b>Medicare out-of-pocket expenses</b> for GP visits and tests not covered by Medicare (for example, an MRI scan), as well as other areas that require Medicare gap assistance (forexample, out-of-pocket expenses for medical specialist consultations).</p> <p><b>Private Health gap expenses</b> not covered by private health insurance (excluding the first \$250/\$500 of excess or annual excess fee).</p> <p><b>Optical expenses.</b> Prescription glasses only. \$600 limit. Sunglasses are not covered.</p> <p><b>Hearing aids, mobility aids and equipment expenses.</b> Open Place will continue to seek other available subsidies and assistance, e.g. SWEP or the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank.</p> <p><b>Allied health expenses</b> for dietician, podiatry, physiotherapy, osteopathy, myotherapy and chiropractic treatment. Efforts will be made to ensure that a primary health care plan is initiated by a GP which provides five free sessions per year.</p> <p><b>Homecare expenses.</b> Meals on Wheels, home cleaning, district nursing.</p> <p><b>Pharmaceutical expenses</b> for <u>medical</u> prescriptions (only) that are provided by a GP. Assistance is only available by <u>prior arrangement</u> with a pharmacy who can accept payment by direct deposit.</p> <p>Please note: Reimbursements will not be provided for pharmaceutical expenses except when dispensed via a hospital stay/visit.</p> <p><b>Dental</b> expenses from a private dental clinic. As treatments can involve multiple visits <u>a treatment plan will need to be approved by Open Place after the initial consult and prior to the first appointment.</u> Alternatively, Open Place will make every effort to link Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers to local public or community dental services and arrange for them to be placed on a priority list.\</p>
Conditions	<p>Health funding can go towards any number of the eligible expenses listed above. Reimbursements will only be made for amounts over \$30. You may submit multiple receipts that add up to \$30, <u>except</u> for pharmaceutical expenses.</p> <p>Health funding is not transferable – i.e. a person's unused counselling sessions or Healthfunds cannot be transferred to another Forgotten Australian/Pre-1990 Care Leaver or family member.</p>

Funding Type	Dental
Who may access	Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers
Limit	\$1,000
Eligible expenses	Dental expenses from a private dental clinic that exceed the funds you have available for Health expenses (i.e. \$1,250/financial year).
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available to Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers who have <b>not</b> used \$5,000 or more of Open Place funding on <b>dental</b> since January 2010.</li> <li>The \$1,000 can be used on dental treatment only.</li> <li>The \$1,000 can be used together with the 2021-22 health brokerage of \$1,250</li> </ul>
Funding Type	Medical Accommodation and Transport
Who may access	Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers and/or carers supporting them
Limit each financial year	\$250
Eligible expenses	<p>Up to \$250 is available to Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers who live in regional and rural areas (or their partner/family member or carer if they are supporting the service user during treatment) who are required to attend medical appointments, including hospital visits or to see a specialist, in Melbourne metropolitan area or their nearest regional centre.</p> <p>In the first instance, the Coordinated Support team will explore government funding options such as the Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) which is designed to help Victorians who must travel a long way for specialist medical treatment by subsidising their travel and accommodation costs.</p>
Conditions	<p>Funding is for people who live in regional and rural Victoria.</p> <p>Funding must be discussed with and approved by Open Place <u>before the first appointment with the health provider is attended</u>. Open Place will be unable to reimburse Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers if there has been no prior approval.</p> <p>A copy of the appointment documentation will be required prior to approving requests for medical transport or accommodation funding.</p> <p>Invoices and/or receipts will be required to process any reimbursements for medical transport and accommodation expenses.</p> <p>Once a reservation for accommodation has been paid, changes cannot be made to the booking.</p>

**Items no longer covered under health brokerage:**

- White goods
- Kitchenware/appliances
- Gym equipment/memberships
- Car repairs
- Mattresses/bedding
- Cleaning equipment (vacuums etc.)

**Find and Connect**

If your time in 'care' was less than 6 months in Victoria, or took place interstate, you may access up to \$1,000 health brokerage (lifetime total) in certain circumstances. Please contact Open Place if you are unsure whether this condition applies to you.



## Victorian Inquiry into Historical Forced Adoptions

Our colleagues at VANISH have sent us an update on the *Parliamentary Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoptions* in Victoria which has been underway for the past two years. The inquiry was originally due to report by December 2020 however was delayed due to COVID-19. The report is now ready and will be handed down in Parliament as soon as sitting can resume.

The inquiry received 114 submissions, mostly by mothers whose children were taken from them and by adopted persons, with some submissions by other family members. Institutions involved in forced adoption policies and practices in the 50s, 60s and 70s also made submissions and attended hearings, as did organisations providing search, support and legal services.

In their submission, VANISH described what happened, the long-term impacts on those affected and the long history of advocacy by individuals and organisations calling for justice and reparation. VANISH argued that the State and Commonwealth apologies in 2012 and 2013 did not result in any meaningful change for those affected and recommended that a sensitive redress scheme be established, the statute of limitations be lifted and more funding be dedicated to counselling, support and legal services as well as public education.

For more information, visit <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsc-la/inquiries/inquiry/973> or contact Committee Manager, Yuki Simmonds on (03) 8682 2845.

If you were personally affected by forced adoption practices, you are welcome to speak with Open Place or VANISH about the inquiry or services.

Contact details for VANISH:

- Tel: 1300 826 474
- Email: [info@vanish.org.au](mailto:info@vanish.org.au)
- Write to: PO Box 112, Carlton South VIC 3053

## Open Place Staff Retirement

### David Hartmann

The Counselling and Redress Support teams want to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made over the years by David Hartmann, who retired from his role in April 2021.

David was at Open Place for 11 years, first as a counsellor, then as the manager of the counselling team. In 2015 he also took on management of the Royal Commission team until the conclusion of the Royal Commission in 2017. Thereafter he was manager of the Redress Support and Counselling teams until his retirement. He was an amazing boss and mentor for his teams, consistently supportive of our efforts at professional development, and an advocate for work life balance. He worked with a large number of Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers for many years. David's sense of humour and way of making people feel valued was only part of what made him such a wonderful member of the Open Place staff team, and he is greatly missed by staff and service users alike.

We wish him all the best in his retirement, where we know he is looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren and learning to play the trumpet!

## Do Memorials Matter?

**“Memorials can provide symbolic reparation** and public recognition to victims and survivors in ways that can contribute to healing. Memorials honour those who have suffered and provide opportunities to remember the past and think about the future. They provide a specific place for families and wider society to reflect on the trauma of survivors and mourn the victims lost.

They may also serve to educate future generations about what occurred in society’s history and provide a space for public awareness and remembrance”.

(Source: *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, 2017, Vol.17, p.65)



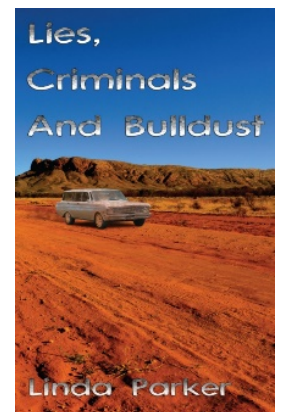
Victorian Memorial, Southbank Promenade (located near Broken Pier and the Ludlow Bar and Dining Room)

## ‘Lies, Criminals and Bulldust’ by Linda Parker

This is Linda’s story of her life until the age of eleven.

Linda is a Forgotten Australian, who was assisted by Open Place to fill in some of the gaps and to share memories, experiences, and stories of her childhood.

If you are interested in purchasing this book it can be purchased online for \$25.30 at: <https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/0994513372>



## Welcome to Open Place



### **Regina Bremen**

Hi everyone, my name is Regina. I joined Open Place as the Assistant Manager in May. I support the Drop In, Coordinated Support and Records teams as well as supporting Michelle with management responsibilities.

Prior to Open Place I have worked in child and family welfare, adult mental health and other wellbeing programs in Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra. I'm happy to be back home in Melbourne (where the good coffee is!). In my spare time I like to go to the footy (go Dees!) hang out with my golden retriever Harry and consume large quantities of hot chips.

Unfortunately we've had to navigate a few lockdowns since I've come on board, but I've been able to meet some of you in the Drop In so far, and I look forward to meeting more of you in the coming months.



### **Brigitte Mathot**

I'm Brigitte and I started working as the Front Desk/Receptionist on 2 July. My first day was a cook up day which was a great opportunity to meet many of you. Since then I have had many more interactions with some of you, either in person or over the phone and it has been delightful getting to know you all.

I am thrilled to be on board the team at Open Place, I am working alongside Tracey, Megan and Allie who have welcomed me with open arms. Aside from my reception duties I have been helping the Admin team with some of the Health Brokerage; this has been great to assist my knowledge in how Open Place supports Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers.

I look forward to getting to know everyone better and I'm eager for the day the Drop In reopens so I can continue seeing you all in person.





### **Cameron Boyd**

I'm Cameron and I started with Open Place in July 2021 as Coordinator of the Counselling and Redress teams. Although lockdown has made it a bit tricky to get to know everyone (I have been able to go to the office twice since I started!), my new colleagues have been incredibly welcoming.

Previously, I've worked across a range of settings supporting people from all walks of life, particularly adults who have experienced childhood sexual abuse. In my spare time, my big passion is music of all kinds. A famous person once said, "Without music, life would be a mistake", and for me, that's true.

I am really looking forward to meeting more of the Open Place community over the next few months.

### **Change of position**

#### **Shaye Silver**

As you may or may not know, I have changed roles within Open Place. I am now in the Counselling and Redress Team as the Counselling Administration Officer. I do miss talking to you all every day so please feel free to call and ask for me anytime for a chat.



### **Mary-Cath Murray**

My name is Mary-Cath and I've been working in the Community Services sector for over 20 years.

I have supported youth, family groups, asylum seekers and refugees within projects in Australia and overseas.

I'm really enjoying working in the Counselling and Redress team. I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to meet so many lovely Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers and be able to support them to complete their Redress applications.

## Open Place Redress Team

This year the Open Place Redress Support team has expanded, with Liz and Virginia being joined by Erika and Mary-Cath.

We are now able to offer outreach to regional areas (in between lockdowns and working within COVID-19 safe restrictions).

We have travelled to many regional locations supporting Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers with National Redress Scheme applications.

The National Redress Scheme allows people who experienced childhood sexual abuse while in the 'care' of institutions to apply for financial and other reparations.

If you are considering applying to the National Redress Scheme and would like support or information about eligibility, please give the Redress Team a call at Open Place on 1800 779 379.

## What's coming to Open Place\*

**\* All activities are currently on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions**

### Movement Sessions

Open Place, in collaboration with Evolutio Sports Physio, are pleased to offer free Movement Sessions!

**What:** Movement to improve wellbeing, catered to all fitness levels and abilities.

**When:** Fridays at 11am

**Where:** Open Place Drop-in Centre, 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond.

**Spots are limited!** If you would like to attend, please contact Open Place on 1800 779 379 and ask to speak to Emma.

### Hair Aid

Hair Aid sends teams of volunteer hairdressers to work with Australian organisations that support those in our own communities that need a hand.

**What:** Free haircuts from Hair Aids Volunteer Hairdressers

**When:** Time and date to be confirmed.

**Where:** Open Place drop-in centre, 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond.

**Please note spaces will be limited so bookings are essential.** If you would like to be contacted when time and date is confirmed, please contact Open Place and ask to speak with Emma.

## Oz Harvest NEST Programme

**What:** An easy and fun way to learn healthy eating habits and how to cook simple and low-cost meals.

**When:** Time and date to be confirmed. Each NEST session is held at the same day and time each week for 2.5 hours.

**Where:** Open Place Drop In centre, 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond.

**Please note spaces will be limited so bookings are essential!** If you would like to be contacted when time and date is confirmed, please contact Open Place and ask to speak with Emma.

## Financial Capability Workshops

**What:** The Financial Capability service is for people who require:

- Budgeting support
- Skills development to avoid or resolve financial difficulties
- Increased capacity to manage money and to know where to get further help
- Greater financial knowledge to reduce risk of homelessness
- Information about financial and/or credit contracts.

**When:** Time and date to be confirmed.

**Where:** Open Place Drop In centre, 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond.

**Please note spaces will be limited so bookings are essential.** If you would like to be contacted when time and date is confirmed, please contact Open Place and ask to speak with Emma.

## Recipe

### BBQ Chicken Wings

#### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 12 chicken wings

#### Method

- Preheat the oven to 200°C. Line a roasting pan with baking paper.
- Mix the honey and the sauces together in a bowl. Cut the small tips from the wings and discard. Cut the wing in half at the "elbow", add the wings to the sauce and stir to coat.
- Spread the chicken wings out in the pan in a single layer. Cook for 30 minutes, turning a few times until browned and cooked through.



## Friday Cook Up

The Friday Cook Up recommenced operating, once restrictions were lifted, to the first Friday of the month. It was wonderful to see familiar faces return to Open Place to enjoy a lovely hot lunch prepared by Emma, Megan and Lydia (pictured below). At one of the Cook Ups, Raymond, along with some helpers, tested our



Waiting patiently for Friday Cook Up



Our Friday Cook Up chefs. From the front: Lydia, Emma and Megan

new BBQ, much to the delight of everyone who happily dined on sausages and hamburgers in fresh bread with a side of salad.

**With current COVID-19 restrictions in place, the monthly Friday Cook Up is currently on hold.** We hope it won't be too much longer before we will be able to resume the Cook Up and see you again.



Raymond (mask) and "helpers" testing our new BBQ



Michael and Pearl enjoying the Drop In



## Find a Word

# Australia Word Search



Y U C P G O L D C O A S T F W M W L J Q W S  
N M O U N T K O S C I U S Z K O G P W Q B Y  
G D U K I N D I A N O C E A N V J A V G U D  
R G J T A S M A N I A I B N J E H V W E E N  
E K U Z P L A T Y P U S R B H G U L J G U E  
A R A L A M I N G T O N I P Z E I O B C C Y  
T B U N K O A L A T X B S Q X M M V I E A O  
B C U Y G B B G J M W T B J J I Q A F V L P  
A A A S T A O V R S D E A O U T B A C K Y E  
R D D N P E R T H Y R N N S L E D H H I P R  
R W E E B S F O F D N A E P D O M Q W E T A  
I O W I L E U B O N D I B E A C H D E H U H  
E I J F N A R W E E S H B Q L W D D D T S O  
R A Y Q T S I R C Y R J Y M L O C D R T T U  
R F U V A O V D A F O O T B A L L T J E R S  
E E J S T U R Q E V M E L B O U R N E E E E  
E S Y D N E Y H A R B O U R B R I D G E E Y  
F S C E M P A C I F I C O C E A N U F D S C

Sydney Harbour Bridge  
Great Barrier Reef  
Sydney  
Mount Kosciuszko  
Pavlova  
Perth  
Platypus  
Melbourne

Kangaroo  
Gold Coast  
Sydney Opera House  
Adelaide  
Canberra  
Brisbane  
Lamington  
Indian Ocean

Eucalyptus Trees  
Koala  
Tasmania  
Vegemite  
Bondi Beach  
Pacific Ocean  
Football  
Outback

Source: <http://allfreeprintable.com/australia-word-search>

## Social Support Groups (SSGs)

### Shepparton SSG

The Shepparton SSG came together on Monday 19 April for a special event at the Peter Ditton/Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers memorial picnic setting at Victoria Park Lake. To mark its importance and to generate awareness of Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers, the group invited Shepparton's Mayor Kim O'Keefe to officially open the picnic setting and plaque, and also invited their local MPs the Honourable Wendy Lovell, and the Honourable Suzanna Sheed to attend and speak at the event. All were delighted to offer their time to attend and spoke warmly and compassionately about Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers and with group members on the day. The sun shone, we all enjoyed a picnic lunch together, shared stories of Peter and memories of various groups events together. The event was covered by the Shepparton News newspaper and appeared in the Friday 23 March edition of the newspaper. To quote Mayor Kim O'Keefe, "Listening to and recognising Forgotten Australians must continue. This group (Open Place) makes sure people are not alone and don't have to live a life alone and in silence. They are a voice and actually share and care, and also understand the experiences that many have felt. We can have lots of things put up across Greater Shepparton and council is proud to be part of lots of things, but when it has such a purpose, it has much more deeper meaning." **Source:** *Shepparton News*, "Remembering a 'larger than life' Forgotten Australian" *Editor: James Bennett*

In May we met at the North Shepparton Community and Learning Centre to catch up on the big event in April and to plan for the months ahead. It was a lovely opportunity to chat and have lunch together; we left each other feeling quite full after a fantastic lunch of chicken, chips and salads, and with lifted spirits after seeing one another again.



Shepparton SSG



Unfortunately, the plans for lunch at the GV Hotel in June had to be cancelled due to the snap lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions.

Restrictions were lifted in July which enabled the group to come together once again and enjoy a lovely “Christmas in July” lunch at the Shepparton Club. We had a large turnout with close to 40 people attending who dined on a two-course meal with a selection of beef or turkey and a choice of two desserts.

Sadly, due to another snap lockdown announced on 5 August, the group’s planned lunch out at the Peppermill had to be cancelled at short notice. We hope the months ahead will allow us to get back up to see everyone in Shepparton and for the group to enjoy more activities and get-togethers again.

Stay well everyone, we look forward to seeing you all again very soon hopefully.



## Ballarat SSG

Ballarat SSG meet on the second Tuesday of the month. Despite COVID-19 restrictions - we have managed some outings. In March we hired a bus and headed to the Halls Gap Zoo. We picked up some yummy bakery catering on the way and had a lovely day meeting the animals.

With the wintry cold weather hitting Ballarat, we decided the pictures was a good idea... so we have been twice! We saw “June again”, and “Dream Horse” followed by lunches at Dr Fill, and the Groove Train.



Ballarat SSG

## Geelong SSG

To start the year off in 2021 our group met in February at The Grovedale Neighbourhood House in Heyers Road, Grovedale. Our SSG meets on the second Wednesday of the month – meeting bimonthly at The Neighbourhood House.

In March the group came along to enjoy a BBQ lunch at Eastern Park where we like to go at least once or twice a year.

In April we enjoyed a big day out! We hired a bus that transported us from The Grovedale Neighbourhood House to the Werribee zoo where we enjoyed a quick bite to eat in the Meerkat Bistro before we went on the Safari tour of the Savannah where we enjoyed seeing Rhinos, Giraffes, Bison's Ostrich's and much more. The Werribee Zoo is a "must see".

May was another big outing where the group caught the Queenscliff Ferry to Sorrento, then straight onto an awaiting bus to transport us to Arthurs Seat (on the Mornington Peninsula). Upon arrival we had a bite to eat at the Eagle Café before boarding the state-of-the-art Gondola. The Gondola ride soars high above the trees providing a bird's-eye view over Port Phillip.

We were lucky the sun was shining and no wind or rain all day.

Our June meet-up was cancelled due to COVID-19.

In July we met at the Gateway Hotel for lunch where we enjoyed a delicious Buffet lunch called "The Feast". It certainly was a feast and a great turn out!

Our August meet-up was cancelled due to COVID-19.



Geelong SSG





## Gippsland SSG

Gippsland SSG meets on the second Thursday of the month in Sale for either a luncheon in a local restaurant or a catch up in the Railway Hall in Sale.

It's been a stop-start year given the COVID-19 restrictions, but we have managed to meet up and see each other four out of seven months in 2021, not exactly as we planned but certainly much more than 2020.

Our last group in July was at the Lakeside Club in Sale which was a beautiful cloudless, sunny winter's day and we had a great time with lots of laughs and three birthdays to celebrate which we did with beautiful cakes from a great local bakery -shout out to Pastry and Pieces in Sale!

Currently things are a little uncertain, but we are really hoping we can meet up in September. We are a small and friendly group and always keen to welcome new members so come along on the second Thursday of the month.



Gippsland SSG

## Bacchus Marsh SSG

Bacchus Marsh Group have managed to have a couple of groups during the last few months. We have planned an outing than had to cancel on a couple of occasions, very disappointing for all.

However we did get to go to the Amazing Mill Market in Daylesford in May where we could have spent many more hours walking around looking at the thousands of items from the past, a huge selection of vintage clothes, furniture, antiques, books and memorabilia, bringing back memories for some.

We then managed a meal at the Courthouse Hotel in July. We were hoping to go to the Neighbour House but unfortunately the room was not available due to COVID-19. We hope to be back there soon, as James is very keen to play his guitar for us and have a sing-along (hopefully sometime later this year).



## Richmond SSG

The Richmond SSG enjoyed meeting together at Bromham Place at March and April. We enjoyed pies and ice cream in April and fish and chips in March. It was lovely to see everyone.

## Dandenong SSG

We started our 2021 get-togethers in February with a bus trip to Rayner's Orchard at Worri Yallock. The tractor took us around the orchard and stopped where fruit was available for picking straight from the trees. Bags of peaches, nectarines, nashi pears and plums were all available and absolutely delicious! Not only were we able to avail ourselves of the fresh fruit we also had the opportunity to purchase chutneys, sauces and other goodies after a lovely lunch.



Another highlight of the year so far was a bus trip and lunch in April at the panoramic SkyHigh, Mt Dandenong. We had originally organised this outing for the previous year but had to postpone due to a lockdown. The bus driver gave us a great tour of the Dandenong Ranges on the way up and we were able to enjoy the early Autumn colour changes of the deciduous trees. We had a few hiccups with the entry point as several areas were still sealed off, but everyone managed very well. A great big thank you to Rob for ferrying a couple of walkers and their owners from point C to point A.



Dandenong SSG

We finally got to visit Lynbrook Bistro in May for their wonderful smorgasbord. It's becoming an annual feature and hopefully will remain so.

Club Noble has been wonderful in accommodating us in both March and June as the lead up to some of our groups has been considerably challenging due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

We came out slightly ahead of our budget for the 2020-2021 year because of the lockdowns so we were able to use the 'saved' funding to eat out. The Paddy O'Donoghue Centre still has restrictions under their COVID-19 safe plan and this means we have some trouble securing a suitable space there.

Our most recent group was at Madeline's Café at Jells Park. This was another place we were planning to go to in the previous financial year, but we finally made it. Well done to the café for being able to accommodate us in just 12 hours after the lockdown release and thank you to

everyone who responded so promptly to our messages to re-confirm your attendance. Your co-operation is very much appreciated as sometimes it can be touch-and-go as to whether a group can go ahead or not.

Just a final reminder for those who haven't been to a group in the last couple of years ... please let us know if you would still like to receive the monthly flyers as we are reviewing our group mailing list.

Keep well, safe and warm,  
Diane and Lesley.

### Dandenong SSG



### Frankston SSG

The Frankston group enjoyed lunch at the Frankston Arts Centre followed by the show "What's New Pussycat" with music from the 60s. Unfortunately, our lunch scheduled recently at the Frankston RSL had to be cancelled at short notice due to the recent COVID-19 lockdown.

We thank the group for being so understanding and flexible with our scheduling and cancelling at short notice and we are looking forward to us all getting together again soon.

### Horsham SSG

The Horsham SSG enjoyed a couple of lunches with each other. We are a small group and if anyone would like to join, please contact Open Place on 1800 779 379.



## South West SSG

Warrnambool SSG meets on the first Tuesday of the month – Our bimonthly meeting venue is at the Archie Graham Centre in Timor Street, Warrnambool. We do change the date due to the Melbourne Cup and the Warrnambool Cup.

Our first get together for 2021 was lunch at the Saltwater Bistro at the Warrnambool RSL. It was a good start to the year ahead.

In March the gang met at the beautiful Capital Theatre (built in the 1930s) to see the Australian movie, “Penguin Bloom”, a story of family and the love of a magpie. The group enjoyed popcorn and choc tops before we ventured to the historic Hotel Warrnambool for a coffee after the film.

April was a bowling theme day! First was lunch at the local Bowling Club in Warrnambool, then we ventured down the road to Ten Pin Bowling. We shared a lot of laughs and great competition.

In May we came together for lunch at Proudfoots by the River – an historic boathouse on the banks of the Hopkins River – We enjoyed the food and views so much; we’ve made a reservation for Christmas.

Sadly, our June meet-up was cancelled due to COVID-19.

In July we braved the wild and wintry weather to meet at the Beach Kiosk Café for lunch.

Recently in August we returned to The Archie Graham Centre for the first time since before COVID-19. The centre has had a refurbishment and we can now enjoy a much brighter room with kitchen facilities. We enjoyed our lunch that was catered by the Tasty Plate and unfortunately, we forgot to take photos!



South West SSG



## Bendigo SSG

The Bendigo Group currently meet on the third Thursday of one month at the Long Gully Community Centre in Havilah Road, Long Gully and the next month they come together on the last Saturday of the month for an outing.

February was the group's first catch up for 2021 - Lunch was enjoyed by all at The Huntly Hotel.

In March we met at Marong for a BBQ lunch. It was a beautiful sunny day – perfect for a BBQ cook-up and catch up at a lovely Marong picnic area.

In April we dined out at the long standing and very popular House of Khong in Bendigo.

Our May meet-up was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In June the group came together for our very first meeting at our new venue, The Long Gully Community Centre. The Centre has lots of space, a modern large kitchen, a playground for those young at heart and set in beautiful Iron Bark bushland.

In July we were fortunate that COVID-19 restrictions were eased for Regional Victoria which enabled our group to go ahead with our lunch booking at the Bendigo RSL.



Bendigo SSG



## Preston SSG

The Preston group was able to meet up for a few meals since our last update, most recently at the Darebin RSL for a yummy lunch and some Elvis tunes. He covered all the big hits and even had a bit of a lighting show for us, sitting right up the front!

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had to cancel several of our gatherings this year. While disappointing, we do have some great outings lined up for when we are out of lockdown and I look forward to seeing all the group members together again soon!



Preston SSG

## Donald and District SSG

Donald and District SSG meet on the fourth Thursday of each month.

In 2021 the group have enjoyed lunches and outings, at the Palace Hotel Warracknabeal, St Arnaud Hotel and the Donald hotel. We also enjoyed a relaxing BBQ at the recreation reserve in Beulah.



Donald and District SSG

## Wodonga/Wangaratta SSG

The Wodonga group enjoyed a delicious lunch at Felltimber Community Centre which was provided by the Lee Corner Chinese Restaurant. Felltimber is located by the riverside, the weather was perfect and certainly suited the many ducks who took the opportunity to enjoy a swim.



Wodonga/Wangaratta SSG



## Announcements

Munni's recovery from an injury to her hand in February has been slower (and more painful) than she first thought. Munni has been doing some administrative tasks to support Open Place a few hours a week and is looking forward to being able to return to all duties in the future however she still has a way to go.

We are all looking forward to Munni's recovery and return to the office 😊 In the meantime, if you have been trying to contact her please email [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au) or call 0427 190 232.

## CONTACT US

For information about your current services, to find out how Open Place can support you, or to subscribe to receive this newsletter by email, please contact us.

**Free call 1800 779 379**

**Visit [openplace.org.au](https://openplace.org.au)**

**Email [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au)**



*We recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma.*

*Open Place is committed to inclusivity and providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all people.*

*We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways of Australia. We support Aboriginal people's right to self-determination and culturally safe services.*