

Post Adoption News

Inside...

- 2 Welcome & COVID service update
- 3 PARC Celebrating 30 Years
- 4 Shaping Adoption Today: Reflecting on the Adoption Information Act 30
- 5 30 years of PARC Publications
- 7 From our readers
- 12 PARC & PASQ Updates
- 16 Adoption in the news
- 17 Contact us

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Welcome to Post Adoption News

The Benevolent Society has over 40 years experience in providing post adoption services! In 2019, PASQ celebrated it's 10th Anniversary and in April this year PARC turned 30.

Whilst we had hoped to be reporting on PARC's 30th Anniversary Morning Tea (22nd June), we're pleased to announce we have moved the event to 9th November and have resolved to proceed whether it is face to face or online. That said, this edition remains a celebration of PARC's 30th Year!

This edition, we look back to the establishment of PARC and talk to a long term member of the PARC Advisory Committee. Much has changed over 30 years, and PARC's 19 publications reflects all that we've worked towards so far—we're not done yet!

We also welcome our client stories from Lyn (intertwining her journey and PARC's support over the years), Katherine (about her long quest for knowledge for a true sense of self), and a story from PARC in 1995. A big thank you to all of our contributors.

Of course, we also include our regular service updates and Adoption In the News.

Our readers around Australia, have varying degrees of restrictions in place and ongoing lockdowns particularly in NSW and Victoria. We hope you are well and staying safe

So...enjoy the Spring Weather, put your feet up and have a read – in this edition of Post Adoption News, we cover it all – past, present and future!!

PARC and PASQ Teams

The continuing challenges of COVID

PARC and PASQ started working remotely in March 2020. Since then we have been in the office and out again as our collective well being has required. Eighteen months later and many people in NSW have now been in lockdown for over 10 weeks. We can see that people are tired. **Don't forget, we continue to provide services either via phone, email, Microsoft Teams or facetime!** We're also running online groups. Please be kind to yourselves and feel that you can contact PARC and PASQ for support.

We send our best wishes that you remain safe and healthy and hope that before long we will all be able to move around feely and meet with others who sustain us. We are again sharing some resources we shared back in March 2020.

Online resources

Resources for anyone isolated at home

chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home

10 ways to take care of yourself during coronavirus from ReachOut Australia

au.reachout.com/articles/10-ways-to-take-care-of-yourself-during-coronavirus

Free working from home guided meditations from Headspace

www.headspace.com/work/covid-19

Free soothing mediations and resources from Calm

blog.calm.com/take-a-deep-breath

Free Mindfulness resources by Smiling Mind

www.smilingmind.com.au/covid19-support-page



Celebrating 30 Years

In 1991, 30 years ago, The Post Adoption Resource Centre first opened its doors. PARC was established in response to the NSW Adoption Information Act 1990 which opened adoption records in NSW.

This highly anticipated change was the first time that adopted people, mothers and fathers could access each other's identifying information, allowing family members previously separated by adoption to find and contact each other.

'This was a radical move away from secrecy'.

The change in legislation came after many years of lobbying and advocacy and was seen as controversial by some, and exciting and nerve-racking by others. There was much speculation about what impact the change may have on so many lives.

In foreshadowing what this significant change in legislation may mean for those affected by adoption, the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry that led to the Act recommended a specialist agency be established. So, funded by the Department of Community Services and auspiced by The Benevolent Society, the opening of PARC responded to the great need for a support service

that could assist people affected by adoption as they made their way through this changing landscape.

The Adoption Information Act officially came into effect on 2nd April 1991 and PARC opened to the public on the same day, after a short five months of preparation. A small group of workers were established to provide information and resources, counselling, organise group meetings and intermediary services – all of which PARC continues to this day.

Many people had been waiting a long time for these changes to be enacted and in that first week, PARC took 400 phone calls, and by the first year the small team had responded to over 7000 calls.

Since 1991, PARC has averaged 60 calls a week for 30 years and responded to more than 80,000 information and counselling calls. PARC services have evolved in response to input from the post adoption community and the changing context to include: facilitating retreats, Speakers Forums and Connections Meetings, running Therapeutic Parenting courses for adoptive parents, conducting research, developing a list of publications – 19 in total, and maintaining a library

that stocks adoption specific resources. PARC has a Facebook page where people can keep up to date with PARC's activities and adoption related news. In 2019, our Adoption is Trauma poster was particularly popular on Facebook, being shared 160 times, and viewed over 10,000 times around the world.

Since 1993, PARC has published quarterly newsletters where we have been fortunate enough to share many client stories, giving our readers a chance to hear stories similar to their own.

Our newsletters chronicle changes in adoption legislation and practice, Inquiries into past practises, State and Federal Government Apologies and issues of concern to our

stakeholders such as accessing records, birth certificates, searching using DNA, mental health and discharge of adoption.

In previous anniversary newsletters, PARC workers have written poignant reflections on the beginnings of PARC and how the service has grown. These special issues have acknowledged the many people that have contributed to the inner workings of PARC over the years, but every edition recognises the important and invaluable role that our stakeholders and those accessing PARC events and groups play within PARC. We are deeply appreciative of your support and thoughtful feedback that help PARC to continue to develop and evolve. Thank you! PARC is 30 years young!!

Shaping Adoption Today: Reflecting on the Adoption Information Act 30 years on

Written by Silvia K

Peter Hennessy speaks with the Post Adoption Resource Centre and looks back on the ground-breaking and historical legislative reform that changed everything we know about access to adoption information today, and the impact on the community.

The Adoption Information Act 1990 came into effect in April 1991 to give people affected by adoption access to identifying information relating to adoption. At the time Peter was the Director of the NSW Law Reform Commission, who were tasked with reviewing the success of the Act, 12

months after its inception. He explains, "The law in Australia prior to that time was that all adoption records were confidential. After adoption, the child became the child of the adoptive parents and a new birth record was created. The fact there had been an adoption was kept secret." This secrecy reflected the attitudes and beliefs at the time that pregnancies outside of wedlock were illegitimate and shameful. This stigma began to fade by the 1980's and the adoption of babies decreased. This was partly due to the increase in availability of contraceptives and government benefits for mothers. Peter reflected,

"It was a significant change to the law at the time and it was quite controversial. We look back now 30 years on and it is perhaps surprising that there was the level of community concern around the change, but it was certainly significant."

The 12-month Review concluded that the Adoption Information Act 1990 was operating as intended. The Review recommended only minor adjustments. The result was that people affected by adoption could continue to access information

relating to their adoption. With this came the introduction of the Contact Veto. Peter explained, "An adoptee could get the information about their birth parent, but they might then find out that their birth parent had lodged a Veto on contact. So, they could get the information, but they were prohibited from contacting the birth parent." Any breach of the Veto was a criminal offence under the legislation. Peter recalled the controversy and anxiety across the adoption community because of the changes at the time.

The Review of the Act included extensive consultation with community members. At the time it was one of the largest consultations undertaken by the Law Reform Commission. Given the sensitive nature of the review, Peter recounted how, "Some of those hearings were held in private because people didn't want to express views publicly or even be known that they had attended to express a view." The results of the consultation and review found that the legislation worked well, including the Contact Veto system.

The Act has had a long-lasting impact and has influenced the adoption community to this day, including the right for adoptees to access their medical history. Peter reflected,

"That formed the basis of the current legislation in NSW, which essentially led to a significant change to the openness of adoption generally and to records."

Adoptions today are done in an atmosphere of openness.

Since his law reform days, Peter has moved on to sitting on not-for-profit boards and is a part time CEO with one of the charities. He was invited to join the PARC Advisory Committee in the 1990's and he has served on and off for the last 25 years. Reflecting on his time on the committee, he feels the support PARC provides "has been a very significant contribution in relation to assisting people seeking information about their own adoption but also professional support to all people affected by adoption."

Today, it is evident looking back 30 years at this historic piece of legislation that the changes were a direct result of the shifting community attitudes and a movement towards the rights of people affected by adoption.

30 years of PARC Publications

****	Information Sheet All aspects of post adoption and search and reunion Developed and updated continuously	2–4-page handout Available online
***	Quarterly Newsletter Continuously since 1993	
1996	Undertaking Reunion: Connection and Complexity A detailed research study of the reunion experiences of 81 people.	Booklet
1998	The Path Ahead – Adoption, Search and Reunion	DVD
1999	Why Wasn't I Told (PARC Research) Making Sense of late discovery of adoption Reprinted 2008	Booklet
2001	At Least Now I Know (PARC Research) On outcomes of contact between relatives separated by adoption	Booklet

30 years of PARC Publications contin.

2001	The Colour of Difference Journeys in Transracial Adoption. 27 participants.	Book
2003	At Least Now I Know Based on PARC Research 2001	DVD
2003	A Child to Call My Own A study of adopted women and their experience of motherhood	Booklet
2004	Adoption in NSW Resource Guide for professionals	Manual
2005	Intermediary Services in Post Adoption Resource Guide for professionals	Manual
2006	A Search Guide for People Adopted from Overseas	Manual
2011	The Girl in the Mirror 8 teenagers speak about growing up adopted	DVD
2011	First Letters	Booklet
2014	In Your Face (PARC Research) Social media and adoption reunion	Booklet
2014	Who Am I Really? Late discovery of adoption	DVD
2016	PARC 25th Anniversary 5 mins 6 clients speak about PARC + 2 past Counsellors Plus longer interviews	YouTube video
2017	The Colour of Time Follow up to The Colour of Difference. 13 original participants plus 15 younger cohort. A joint initiative with International Social Services and Intercountry Adoptee Voices	Book
2019	Adoption is Trauma Large poster for presentation at the National Suicide Prevention Conference about Adoption and Mental Health. Reached 20 000 people on Facebook in a week.	Poster
2021	The Colour of Difference – republished Due to demand	Book
2021	30th Anniversary Video 10 mins Adoption – our voices, our stories	Video



From our readers

Katherine's story: "The long search for a true sense of where I came from."

I'm Katherine born and adopted in Sydney in 1971. I've known I am adopted for as long as I can remember. As a child, Mum would read children's stories about adoption interspersed with regular children's books to my sister and I, she is also adopted. Day to day I felt like I was part of a normal Sydney suburban family, until the arrival of my cousin when I was 2 ½. Everyone fawned over him comparing his looks, nose, eyes, ears, hands and feet with the rest of the family. It was then that I started to feel different, not part of it. It continued with the next cousin and so on. Whenever this kind of normal family talk arose over the years, I would retreat to my nanna's bedroom to cry, then distract myself to sit looking through her jewelry boxes till someone noticed I was missing. Usually, Nanna would find me while she was retrieving a lace handkerchief. She was a great comfort and would hug me as I said, "I'm not like the others" she would respond "you're all the same to me".

From the age of 3 or 4 I would sit in my bath and exhaust my mum with questions about where I came from

– she'd tell me my mummy wasn't able to look after me and it was because she cared she gave me to her - it was never far from my mind, despite the beautiful little ceramic plaque my mum gave me which read:

Not flesh of my flesh, nor bone of my bone

But still miraculously my own.

Never forget for even a minute

You did not grow under my heart but in it.

In about 3rd class at school, I began to hate being adopted. I felt ashamed because kids at school said my real mum and dad didn't want me, so I did my best never to tell anyone I was adopted. My young mind, and until recently my much older self was constantly trying to reconcile why a mummy and daddy would give up their baby, beside the very real love I received from mum and dad raising me. Why didn't they want me and physical likeness became my internal monologue until New Year's Eve 2020.

In Year 8 at high school I skipped school when I realized what genetics in biology entailed - I couldn't participate in assignments, and history caused a little pain as peers talked about where their ancestors were from in relation to whatever country customs and wars we were learning about – some kid had called me a dago in primary school so I knew early on not to mention what I did know of my ancestry to avoid further hurt. At a private girls' school with peers well versed in their geographic lineage - I felt like a mutt – dad had called the neighbour's dog a mutt and explained to me it was a bit of this or that, not sure really darling...

Age 16 I began my search for myself. My parents were divorcing, my first true love dumped me, and I lost my best friend - doubting myself in every way, I

didn't know what I believed in, where I was going, who I was, and even what I liked and disliked. Mum and Dad were not surprised that I had outgrown the limited knowledge they had of my biological parents that passed on to them by St Margaret's Hospital staff the day they collected me. My mother was blonde and 5ft2, my father was Italian, blonde and 6ft2 and both were Roman Catholic – nurses predicted I would grow to a height somewhere between the two.

Mum helped me obtain the non-identifying information about my biological parents from Community Services. They became Helen and Dion – again to be outgrown and the backbone to much more.

At 25 I had been married, first time round, for about a year. We were thinking of children and ancestral health, so I went to Mum and Dad and explained I had to find Helen and Dion, assuring them both I loved them and that I wasn't searching to replace either of them, it was just something I needed to do. They held up their chins and assisted me in whatever way they could. Community Services provided the remainder of what they held, except for my father's name, which was said to be noted on file but couldn't be revealed without the consent of my biological mother. I also obtained all my hospital birth records, including some counselling notes detailing some of Helen's apprehension, which brought some comfort.

I joined the Reunion Information Register, applied for my original birth certificate (my father wasn't listed on my birth certificate, apparently at the time mothers were unable to list fathers without their consent, nor could unmarried mothers list fathers). I applied for Helen's marriage certificate extract and Mum set about locating where she and her husband lived via electoral rolls on microfiche. I attended meetings at the Benevolent Society PARC in Bondi Junction and these gave me strength and hope, as well as sadness for those people who spend a lifetime searching. I felt this ordeal can't be easy for Mum and Dad - when they collected me from the hospital 26 years ago, they never imagined that one day they might feel threatened by my biological parents - I was theirs. I knew that as we were growing up my mum lived in fear that our biological mothers might turn up one day and try to take us away from her.

My search was over within 3 months! My birth certificate surprised us all, Helen had named me – I didn't feel like a Daniele – I drove to where she lived at the time and sat in my car imagining someone who looked just like me, only pregnant, coming and going. The marriage certificate extract revealed she married 7

years after I was born, and Mum found her living 10 minutes from Dad on the far north coast of NSW. Mum cried a lot that day. I wrote to Helen – it was a couple of weeks before my 26th birthday.

My 26th birthday was no ordinary day. Following a day of calls and catch ups with friends I was preparing to go to dinner with family, then a call as I was heading out the door

I had anticipated hearing from a school friend living in London. A foreign voice identified herself as Helen and asked to speak to Katherine. Holding my breath, I bleated out "oh my god!". Helen and I spoke on the phone for about an hour. I learned I had two half-brothers and a half-sister who was desperate to get on the phone and speak to me so she did, cutting in several times during this first call. My sister told me my birthdate was always circled on the kitchen calendar and her mother usually spent days in bed sick leading up to it, now she knew why. Helen and I spoke again over a week later on her birthday and met a few weeks later. She had a photograph of me I'd sent with my letter and I had nothing of her – I figured she looked like me. Before I knew it, she was in front of me and her first and stoic low tone words were "Jesus Christ, you look just like your father". Those words bounced around in my head for years after. Caught up in initial and surreal excitement, we sat at lunch for 4 or 5 hours, but a seed of identity had been planted and so far I was a little disappointed to lack a likeness with her, the topic of my biological father had been neglected all lunch but for this excerpt : she told me she and Dion had been apart about a month when she realized she was pregnant with me, and having made her decision to have me adopted she contacted him to let him know she was pregnant. Back then Helen and Dion decided their relationship wouldn't work. Dion offered to assist with an abortion, his offers of marriage and support declined, he respected her decision to have me adopted and both decided to move on with their lives and not make contact again.

I went on to find only a small likeness with one of my half brothers and sister and it was obvious my height took after my mother, which meant finding my father now more necessary than ever and Helen refused to break the pact she and Dion had made not to make contact, or to tell me who he was or how to find him myself.

For the next 20 years I would look for my face in the faces of men everywhere,

particularly when in Italy, as I'd been told my father was likely northern Italian. A Judge friend told me the laws around adoption had changed and I was likely to be able to receive my father's name now with little effort. Fearing bureaucratic walls I instead placed an ad in a West Australian newspaper in 2013. In one of our days getting to know each other, my half-sister said that she was sure our mother had let slip that Dion was living in WA and that he was a Gemini. A private investigator called me to say I hadn't provided enough details to conduct a search, but a military identification number would find him within a day – Helen had noted on file that Dion had been an engineer in the armed forces – of course not the number.

In January 2019 a friend introduced me to her friend and part-time genealogist, convinced that she'd be able to map out my family tree and find my father. Megan was rather calm and matter of fact about being able to, and within a couple of weeks she had populated my maternal side up to about 5 generations with 2000 relatives. Megan then insisted 2 things: to obtain the name on my file from Community Services and do the Ancestry DNA test as it is the most widely used.

The name on my file was obtained following ID check and statutory declaration not to approach without the use of recommended intermediary. Megan determined within 2 hours of receipt of Dion's full name that he had died 12 months prior – I'd missed him – my heart sank. But Dion left behind a daughter and a son and with assistance of PARC at the Benevolent Society, we reached out to his children. After a DNA test with Dion's son Jeremy, it was confirmed that Dion was not my father. Shortly afterwards my Ancestry results matched me with my first-half cousin on my paternal side, David. We were on our way. David had his own sensitive situation, so I tried to maintain his privacy while searching for links. Eventually after meeting various family members, I was given a photograph of my biological father. I knew right away that I'd found him. David recalled that as of 2012 my father was living on the Gold Coast, though he worried his lifestyle might have taken him early and if not, he wouldn't be well. In November 2019, I located my father via missing persons. He was alive and was very sick, physically and mentally. I met Werner, of German heritage, two weeks after I found him. He didn't know I existed. He also fit only one point in the non-identifying information

– he liked to drink. He remembered my mother – he tried to commit suicide after she broke up with him, then he found her with Dion the army guy. Jeremy (Dion's Son) and I are still in touch – he calls me his Temp Sister, and we both took comfort in knowing how Helen and Dion were briefly connected.

I wrote to Helen to tell her I found my biological father and who he was, which had she been in any doubt she figured out the day she met me. Helen and I haven't been in touch since she remarried in 2006 but Joanne, Helen's first cousin who I met through Ancestry and continue to meet for tea and scones, tells me that Helen will reach out to me again, when she is able.

After meeting Werner, a tremendous calm came over me. I'd done it! I'd found my biological parents and more than that I had a true sense of where I came from with ancestors and cultures to learn more about – I was humbled. I'm at peace with my ups and downs and short-circuiting with Helen and Werner – neither of them could ever replace Mum and Dad. In this journey I see my greatest achievements are the connections between David and Sarah (David's younger sister), for Jeremy and for the beautiful cousins I frequently see or write to, as well as last but not least, Megan who helped me find them all – a truly special person.

I've realized my resilience and determination and I appreciate my adoption more than ever before and in a whole new way.

Mother's Experience: Upon Reflection

When my son was born I was led to believe he would have lifelong health problems due to birth trauma. Having to accept I was in no position to provide that care, I signed the papers put before me, not understanding the implications of my actions at the time. Hence my nightmare began.

Based on his medical problems and my inability to care for him my son became a State Ward placed in foster care until/if he became fit for adoption.

I wrote numerous letters seeking information regarding the health of my son. Had he survived? If so, was he well? Three months after his birth, my situation changed. I was able to provide whatever care my son would need and I wanted him returned to me. My pleas were ignored, my letters unanswered. Many years later I would learn he recovered within weeks of his birth from the "lifelong health problems".

Learning of changes in the adoption legislation and of the Post Adoption Resource Centre [PARC], the love of my son far outweighed the fear and anxiety of past experiences and despite my reservations regarding organisations; I rang the Post Adoption Resource Centre and spoke to "E", an absolute angel at the end of the phone. Based on her compassion and empathy I made an appointment. It was February 2008. Naively I approached my appointment as a fact finding mission believing once I had the information I needed I could easily find what happened to my son. I was wrong!

From the appointment I realised the search for the missing pieces of my jigsaw would involve far more than applying for identifying information about my son. My time with the Post Adoption Resource Centre would prove to be a roller coaster ride.

Seeking to understand what happened to me and my son I had to look at my early years, my upbringing, relationships at the time, through to the harsh practices of the welfare system of the 60's. Everything was put under the microscope. Traumatic events and emotions long repressed came to the fore, core beliefs were challenged and I found I had to work at new ways of managing emotional responses.

My internal dialogue was that those who had involved themselves in my son's removal may have broken my heart but they would NEVER break my spirit. So I continued.

PARC supported me as I allowed myself for the first time, to openly grieve the loss of my son and of motherhood. At times I had to take a break. Slowly learning the truth but becoming vulnerable and emotionally fragile I needed to process one step before taking the next. With PARC's guidance and support I was then able to move on.

PARC provided me with the resources whereby I read extensively about separation and adoption. I wrote poems to express my emotions and wrote articles and personal journals to help shift the emotions that built up along the way. I learned a great deal from attending group sessions, accessing copies of the legislation such as the 1939 Child Welfare Act and the 1965 Adoption Act which PARC helped tie into my personal story.

Becoming more determined I obtained copies of records relating to my son from the various organisations involved in his adoption. When information was insufficient or non-existent I would return and ask why, then request they check again. At times it was difficult to accept there WERE no answers but again, through counselling and support I was able to work through it, picking myself up time and again to carry on along the path that retraced my past.

Growing stronger I found my voice and knew I had the courage and determination needed to work towards healing.

When things seemed insurmountable PARC were there, keeping me focussed on the task at hand, mindful of the impact my findings would have and of the emotions that would arise, preparing me for the disappointments and sharing in the lighter moments.

PARC gave me the ability to believe in me. They gave me a voice and I used that voice to meet with representatives from the Organisations who had played such a major role in the adoption process, a voice that would lead me to take part in the NSW Government Apology for Past Forced Adoption Practices 2012.

It was on THAT day I promised myself “no more secrets, no more lies”.

Retracing my steps helped me to move forward, leaving no stone unturned in trying to find the answers about what happened to me and my son and why, even though it meant turning myself inside out to do it. The entire process led to the decision to reach out to my son.

PARC made it possible for me to stand in front of my son armed with the truth of our story or as near as was possible despite my records having been destroyed.

My son’s words “I knew you would find me one day” was the culmination of my hard work with PARC. They provided the safety net I needed as we attempted to solve the jigsaw puzzle, helping me face myself, helping me work through intense emotion as I unearthed and sorted fact from fiction.

My gratitude lies in the fact that in setting out to find my son I found myself.

Thank you PARC, for being instrumental in helping me to heal in body, mind and spirit and for giving me the tools to create a life without shadows

Congratulations on your 30 Years

May you continue to assist others

as you have assisted me.

Forever thankful - Lyn

An adopted person shares on searching: “In 1995 I discovered my adoption file in England...”

In 1995 I discovered my adoption file in England which could only be released through an adoption counsellor. PARCs counsellor agreed to help. I discussed my fears of proceeding with my search for my birth mother. “Was it fair turning up when I was very ill with AIDS?”. Her response was simple, “How would I feel if my birth mother announced that she had terminal breast cancer?” My response “Well thank goodness I found you in time!” “There you go” she said. I found and met my Mum in England four months later. We still play online scrabble every day.

Follow us and stay connected

Did you know that both Post Adoption Support Queensland and the Post Adoption Resource Centre have a Facebook Page with adoption related stories, posts, updates and events?



/postadoptionupportql
/benevolentsocietyNSW

Need Support?

PARC and PASQ both offer counselling and intermediary services for people separated by adoption. If this article has raised anything for you, or you would like support around the impacts of adoption, then please contact your local service:

PARC: **02 9504 6788** (NSW)
PASQ: **07 3170 4600** (QLD)

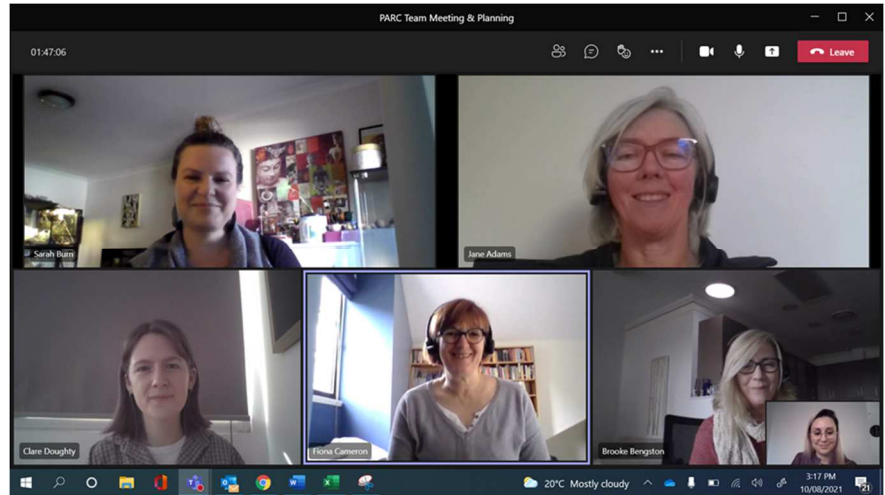
PARC Update

Contact us on 02 9504 6788 or parc@benevolent.org.au

PARC Team Events

The PARC Team has been working remotely again since 21 June 2021. Here we are at our Team Meeting (minus Marg).

As you know we have rescheduled our much anticipated 30th Anniversary Event to 9th November. Arranging and rearranging is quite time consuming and we thank you for your understanding. As the situation is so fluid, for more information please contact PARC on 02 95043 6788 or parc@benevolent.org.au



The PARC Team continue providing our services with the aim of learning new skills and ways of delivering services. We are in the process of republishing *The Colour of Difference - Journeys in Transracial Adoption* which we first published in 2001. Copies are sought after since the publishing of a follow up book *The Colour of Time* in 2017. We are looking forward to launching our 10 min video *Adoption: our stories, our voices* on the 9th November and are grateful to our 9 participants for their generous participation.

In July and August we have been busy running online groups – 4 in total. More information follows.

Adoption Belonging and Connection (ABC) Group

PARC and PASQ together ran a short series of two therapeutic groups for adopted people last month. The themes were **self esteem** and **adoption in the workplace**. People talked about avoiding being the centre of attention and the difficulty of getting their voices heard. The groups reflected on COVID and lockdowns as well, and found that the online experience had its benefits in that people from both states could come together to share their adoption experiences over two nights. The common themes in the feedback from those who attended were:

- Hearing shared experiences and connection
- Not feeling alone in my experience
- Feeling validated, understood and compassion
- Learning from others

Mothers Group

In August, PARC and PASQ jointly held a series of 2 online groups for mothers. We explored two themes; **My Identity as a Mother** and **Living with Loss**. We trialled running the groups in a morning timeslot and it seemed to work for those in attendance. Both groups were well attended and, being online, we were able to have Mothers' join us from around the country. There were difficult experiences openly shared and a strong "sense of acceptance", "similar experiences and feelings" and "being understood" by each other from the feedback we received.

While many around the country remain under tough lockdown restrictions and are separated from their usual support systems it was an opportunity to come together and connect. Thank you to those who attended, to those who shared and to those who sat quietly and contributed by holding a safe space for all.

PARC Groups and Events

September

NSW Government Apology for Forced Adoption (20 September, Online, 10 – 11am)

October

Therapeutic Parenting Refresher Evening (Wednesday 6th October, Online)

Therapeutic Parenting 6 week Course (commencing late October, Online)

November

PARC 30th Anniversary Morning Tea (9 November, 10.30am – 12.30pm)

PASQ Update

Contact us on **07 3170 4600** or pasq@benevolent.org.au

Toowoomba and Surrounds Adoption, Belonging and Connections Meeting, July 2021

PASQ counsellors Francesca Crowe and Cathy Clancy facilitated an Adoption, Belonging and Connections meeting at the Toowoomba City Library on the 17th July. Even though it was a crisp, blue sky, westerly-wind-blown day, the group provided welcome warmth and comfort.

It was touching to realise that while some participants lived in Toowoomba, others had travelled from the greater Darling Downs and Western Queensland regions, driving between two, to three and a half hours to attend. It is a testimony to the commitment our clients show in supporting themselves and one another in their adoption journeys. Two guest speakers gener-



ously shared their experience of searching, connection, and reunion and the attendees also shared their stories, experiences and strength.

Feedback from the group was extremely positive and requests were made for more regular meetings and a “mothers only” group which shows the need for adoption support services in regional Queensland. At the conclusion of the group members had lunch together and some swapped contact details to make continue supporting one another.

Adoption Belonging and Connection (ABC) Group

PASQ joined with PARC online for the Adoption, Belonging and Connection Group. Read more about the group above in PARC's update above.

Upcoming Groups and Events

The AdoptTEA: Highlighting Adoption and Mental Health

The AdoptTEA

As part of Queensland Mental Health Week in October, The AdoptTEA is an opportunity to raise awareness of the impacts of adoption on the mental health of adopted people as well as reduce the stigma surrounding seeking support.

PASQ is hoping to join with groups all over Queensland in holding their own AdoptTEA morning teas for this great cause. To host your own AdoptTEA or for more information, please contact PASQ on 07 3170 4600 or pasq@benevolent.org.au

Follow us at facebook.com/theadopttea

Join an AdoptTEA event

The AdoptTEA—Brisbane

Saturday, 9th October 2021

10am-12noon

Bronco's Leagues Club

Bookings are essential by Wednesday, 6th October 2021
adopteesqld@gmail.com or 0498 434 838 or 0401 051 633

See more events and updates at facebook.com/theadopttea or contact PASQ.

Join us: 9th Anniversary of the Queensland Apology for Forced Adoption Policies and Practices

Please join us for the 9th Anniversary of the Queensland Government's Apology for Forced Adoption Policies and Practices.

Friday, 26th November 2021

10:00 am—11:30 am (Doors open at 9:45 am)

Premiers Room, Parliament House

Due to health restrictions and in an effort to preserve the in-person nature of this event, **bookings are essential and open Tuesday, 5th October 2021. To book your seat, please contact PASQ, as soon as possible.**

Follow the event on Facebook for more updates facebook.com/qldapologyforcedadoption or contact PASQ 07 3170 4600 or pasq@benevolent.org.au

Marking 30 years of Adoption Legislation Amendment

This year marks 30 years since Queensland's adoption legislation amendments came to pass (1 June, 1991). PASQ pause to recognise the tireless efforts of the many involved in bringing these amendments to be and we look forward to continuing the work towards seeing those affected by adoption better supported and represented in the state of Queensland and across Australia.

If you'd like to know more about the amendments or the story behind them, Jigsaw Queensland have provided a wonderful resource on their website, here:

www.jigsawqueensland.com/1991-30-year-anniversary

Supporting Mothers: October Mothers Events

PASQ are looking forward to sharing not one but two events that support Mothers who have lost a child to adoption. Please see the flyers below for more information or contact us.



**You Gave Me a Voice
Mothers Feel Good Day**

Are you a mother who lost a child to adoption?
You're Invited to join us for a
FEEL GOOD SOCIAL DAY
SATURDAY 30TH OCTOBER
9am – 12:30
Morning Tea Included

**At Benevolent Society
(Post Adoption Support QLD)**
at
189 Coronation Dr, Milton QLD 4064
(Street Parking Available)

Please phone
Vivienne: 0421403105 Joyce: 0410319877
Beatriz: 0401 675 938

We hope to see you there!



Join us at our upcoming Online Mother's Group.

Due to the popularity of our last two sessions, we are hosting another Mother's Group. This group will focus on the topic: **My Authentic Self**.

The group is an opportunity for mothers who have lost children to adoption to come together to meet and chat with other mothers in a supportive online environment. Come and chat, share tools and activities that help us to feel less isolated.

Facilitators
Post Adoption Resource Centre and Post Adoption Support Queensland Counsellors.

When
Tuesday 19th October

Time
10.00am- 12.00pm

Cost
Free

Where
Online, via Microsoft Teams.
The link will be sent out the day before each session to those who RSVP.

RSVP
Booking is essential.
Please RSVP by 13th October
to Post Adoption Resource Centre
02 9504 6788 or parc@benevolent.org.au

For further information please contact either parc@benevolent.org.au or pasq@benevolent.org.au
benevolent.org.au

Quote corner

When you start to feel
Like things should have
Been better this year,
Remember the mountains and valleys
That got you here
They are not accidents
And those moments weren't in vain.
You are not the same
You have grown and you are growing

You are breathing, you are living
You are wrapped in
Endless
Boundless
Grace
And things will get better
There is more to you than yesterday
- Morgan Harper Nichols

Adoption in the news

Forced adoption policy fallout



“Di fell pregnant at 17 in the mid 1970's and was forced to give up her child. Two years ago, Di got an email that changed her life again. It was from a man, asking if she was his mother.”

To read more click [here](#) or visit www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/mornings/forced-adoption/13441486?fbclid=IwAR2hUZk1Hmnk-OSMqNTTKVumVPfe2Zq89MwcnCWeKy32LUlVcMLuXq-7UK4

Victorian Inquiry into Forced Adoption



“Mothers and children separated through decades of horrific forced adoption practices could soon be offered compensation as the state weigh up an Australian-first redress scheme” To read more click [here](#) or visit www.armsvic.org.au/blog/herald-sun-article-regarding-the-victorian-inquiry-?fbclid=IwAR0g0JrIbQ7gZxhQfXRg62r7XNOJCMkdsIYHIRGX6puQ9Qqwsufls-Rspq8

The final report for the Inquiry into responses to historical forced adoptions in Victoria was tabled earlier in September in the Legislative Assembly. To read the report click [here](#) or visit www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lisic-la/inquiries/article/4257?fbclid=IwARIYmDwCRees-9677CRTXKl8TaHqWbgKJ5Hva01Za3znPn-Zs_tXLZ8dGEI

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Finding Family



“As much of the country is in lockdown, we are hearing more from people who lost touch with, or never had the opportunity to be with their family after being placed in care. August is also family history month, so if you're [searching for family](#), particularly if you were in care, there's help available to find them.”

To read more click [here](#) or visit www.findandconnectwrblog.info/2021/08/finding-family/?fbclid=IwAR30SCfA53clcdWB_1PIIwaY4OAK47H1mQXzWBz1RQxR3-xI-rPNVvRIqns

Representing his country of birth in the Paralympics



“Runner Alberto Campbell will don green and gold at the Paralympics in Tokyo, but it will be to represent his birth country Jamaica, not Australia.”

To read more click [here](#) or visit www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-23/tokyo-paralympics-athletics-400m-alberto-campbell/100393148?fbclid=IwAR2u644hQLkVJGqEHKd83xmreVr7tUEXHapE1loDI9pLjEiDw6AHCNUPAXc

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