

MEDIA RELEASE

A rare chance for people affected by adoption to meet in Burwood

12 February 2018 - The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC) will host an Adoption Connections meeting in Burwood on 27 February to provide information and support for people affected by adoption.

It's an opportunity for anyone affected by adoption – adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, siblings, grandparents – to find out more about adoption, one's rights under the law, doing a search for family members, or having a reunion with someone.

Tricia Dearden, a counsellor with PARC, says the meeting in Burwood on 27 February is open to anyone affected by adoption, including family members seeking advice, support or information.

There are no reliable statistics but it is commonly quoted that "about one in fifteen people in Australia is affected by adoption and we're finding more and more people are contacting us to ask for information, support or counselling, as well as for help with finding and contacting family members," Tricia said.

Many people affected by adoption come to the meetings and just listen. Others, like Margaret Watson, often attend to share their stories.

"Adoption is such a personal thing," says Margaret. "For some people, it's a chance to meet new family members; for others, it's distressing to learn the details of what happened at that time. Sometimes things work out and sometimes people are disappointed".

The process for finding and contacting a birth parent or a child who has been adopted is delicate, emotional and difficult.

"It is a very sensitive and challenging experience to search for and try to contact one's child and now adult. who was raised by another family, or with a parent you have never met," says Tricia. "We help people to be discreet in the way they make contact, and prepare for the range of possible reactions.

"Just seeking them out on Facebook can often be traumatising because there is no support, no one to assist or explain events.

“PARC runs Adoption Connection meetings all over NSW, and we have discovered that one of the main benefits of these meetings is the opportunity for people to meet others who have gone through similar life experiences. We understand the importance of discretion; for many people the experience of adoption is something very private and rarely spoken about.”

Counsellors like Tricia have been involved with The Benevolent Society’s Post Adoption Resource Centre since it opened in 1991, when the NSW Adoption Information Act was enacted. Since then, The Benevolent Society’s PARC has supported more than 70,000 people with information, counselling, intermediary services and the process of connection.

What: Adoption Connections Meeting in Burwood

When: 27 February 2018

Where: Woodstock Community Centre, 22 Church St, Burwood

Time: 6p – 8:30p

Cost: Free

RSVP: Booking is essential by 16 February 2018
Please call 1300 659 814 or email: parc@benevolent.org.au

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For interviews with Margaret Watson, please contact:

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About The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society is Australia’s first charity, working as a catalyst for social justice and change for over 200 years. Founded in 1813, The Benevolent Society advocates for a better life for all Australians, and provides in-home services for older Australians, and people with disability, as well as providing programs in Family support and early intervention. We help people age well and live their best lives, staying in their homes wherever possible.

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