

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 51 | October 2026

OPEN PLACE

Support Service for Forgotten Australians

Relationships
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Welcome to spring!

A note from Michelle McDonald, Senior Manager Open Place

It is so nice, when you are working, to come out of winter with longer daylight hours and be able to enjoy the beautiful blooming flowers and busy birds nesting. By the time you receive the newsletter, daylight saving will have also kicked in on



4 October. I know not everyone enjoys the change but once again, if you are working it is nice to have daylight hours to do things after work.

The warmer summer days are fast approaching and let's hope that it will be a quieter fire season than expected. Don't forget to download the VicEmergency app if you haven't already and remember the ABC is your emergency update radio station.

By the time you receive this the AFL footy finals will be completed. It wasn't Collingwood's year this year, so I look forward to it all starting again in 2027!

We have said goodbye to several staff in recent times. Janelle Hess and Marissa Schoof have moved on to new roles in other organisations, and we wished Sharon Guy a very happy retirement after working with Forgotten Australians for over 25 years. Our Assistant Manager Liz is about to leave for a part-time role that will provide the opportunity to focus on health, family and working towards retirement. Liz has loved working at Open Place and will not be a stranger. Look out for her at the occasional cook-up and the Open Place Christmas Party.

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We're going green

Want to get this newsletter as soon as possible *and* help the environment? We can email you future editions instead of sending them via snail mail. Contact us to opt in to email newsletters:

1800 779 379 | info@openplace.org.au | openplace.org.au

The Open Place suite of services is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



We have also had a few staff move to different parts of the service and welcome Anthony Gartner back to Open Place as he transitions back to work after a long illness and major surgery. We also congratulate Kristine Grant in her new role as the Clinical Coordinator of the Service Navigation and Advocacy team (formerly Coordinated Support team).

We are busy recruiting to a range of both temporary and ongoing roles.

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) will be holding its forum in Canberra in October to enable AFA to hold a Parliamentary Round Table at Parliament House with Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, confirmed to attend.

In November, AFA is promoting Forgotten Australian Awareness Week:



'Forgotten Australians Awareness Week (FAAW) is a national initiative that honours Forgotten Australians across Australia.

'In 2004, more than 500,000 people, including child migrants and Indigenous Australians, were estimated to have spent time as children in orphanages, children's homes or other forms of out-of-home care in Australia during the previous century.

'The experiences of Forgotten Australians were formally recognised by Parliament through the 2004 Senate Inquiry, which led to the report *Forgotten Australians - A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

'The inquiry made 39 recommendations. Although progress has been made, much remains to be done.

'Too often, Forgotten Australians have received only partial justice, constrained by limited government funding and bureaucratic decision-making.

'How do we ensure Forgotten Australians become Remembered Australians?

'This week is an opportunity to recognize Forgotten Australians, their place in the history of institutional care, their resilience, and the advocacy that has helped drive change.

FAAW acknowledges everyone with lived experience of institutional care. It seeks to ensure Forgotten Australians are seen, heard and remembered, so children today and in the future do not endure similar harm.'



'This year FAAW will be celebrated from 15 – 23 November 2026 with the theme: ***Ensuring Forgotten Australians are Remembered***'.

Open Place will have a significant community education focus that week and hold an event on 16 November at the memorial in Southbank to mark the 17th anniversary of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians. See page 6 for more information.



I look forward to seeing many of you at the Malvern Town Hall Christmas Party on Saturday 5 December and to those I don't see, I wish you all the very best of kindness and happiness over the Christmas season.

Welcome to Open Place

Beibei Fan, Counsellor

Aloha!

I'm Beibei, one of the new counsellors at Open Place. I joined the team in early September, working alongside Liz and Biraj in the counselling team. I did my social work training in Adelaide. Before joining Open Place, I worked as a mental health clinician in community mental health and prior to that, as a lived experience worker at a mental health crisis centre.

People often describe me as gentle, calm, and softly spoken. Outside of work, you'll usually find me taking my family poodle, Goldie, on long walks, birdwatching, getting creative with crafts, or embracing my favourite role of all—being the cool auntie to my baby nieces and nephew!

I'm grateful to be joining an organisation that has earned such strong trust within the community, and I'm committed to upholding those values. I look forward to meeting and connecting with many of you in the future!





Susan Muller, National Redress Support Worker

Hello, my name is Susan, a new National Redress Support Worker at Open Place. I started here in August 2026. I have enjoyed meeting some lovely people at Drop-In at Richmond and am looking forward to meeting more of you over time.

A little bit about me. I have worked in community sector for the last 20 years, having previously worked supporting people who experienced family violence or sexual assault and making workplaces more inclusive to people with disability. I am so happy to have joined the team working at Open Place.

When I am not working, you might find me reading a novel, at a café or doing something crafty like crochet.



Former residents' reunions/events

MacKillop Family Services

2026 Heritage Christmas Party for former residents

Family members and support persons are very welcome.

When:

- Tuesday 8 December 2026
- 11am – 3pm
- Lunch will be served 12:30pm

Where:

- MacKillop Family Services
- 237 Cecil Street, South Melbourne 3025

RSVP:

- Wednesday 2 December 2026 to 9699 9177 or jenny.glare@mackillop.org.au
- Please advise of any dietary requirements



Anglicare Victoria Heritage Christmas Lunch

The Heritage team at Anglicare Victoria looks forward to welcoming our former residents once again to our annual Heritage Christmas Lunch, to be held on Saturday 28 November.

This year, we will be gathering in a new location, providing an opportunity for guests to visit our new Heritage Centre.

We'll commence the day at the Heritage Centre from 11am to 12pm for those who would like to view selected items from our archival collection. Lunch will then be served at The Yorkshire Stingo Hotel from 12:30 to 2:30pm.

Venue details:

- 11am Heritage Centre – 90 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford (Opposite Anglicare Victoria's Central Office)
- 12:30pm The Yorkshire Stingo Hotel – 48 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford

Parking:

- Unrestricted street parking is available along Hoddle Street on weekends, both directly outside and opposite the Heritage Centre.
- Several car parks, including accessible parking spaces, are located at the rear of the Heritage Centre building. Entry is via Henry Street.

Public transport:

- The Heritage Centre is approximately a 5-minute walk from Collingwood Railway Station (Mernda and Hurstbridge lines). Please note that not all trains stop at Collingwood Station, so we recommend checking your service before travelling.
- From the station, walk along Gipps Street and turn left onto Hoddle Street. The hotel is a further five-minute walk north along Hoddle Street.
- Several bus routes also operate along Hoddle Street, including routes 245, 309, 312, 314, 319 and 350.

RSVP:

Please RSVP by 18 November.

For further information, please contact:

- Bec Tesselaar
Heritage Services Manager
Phone: (03) 9412 6049
Email: Rebecca.Tesselaar@anglicarevic.org.au
- Or email the team at:
Heritage.Centre@anglicarevic.org.au

We look forward to sharing the day with you.

You'll also find this information on the Open Place website: openplace.org.au/external-events



Commemorative event for the 17th Anniversary of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians

Monday 16 November 2026, 11am, Southbank Promenade

Open Place is proud to announce that we're hosting a commemoration of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants at the *World Within, World Without* monument in Southbank at 11am on 16 November 2026: exactly 17 years from the moment of the National Apology. Please see the official invitation on the next page.

About *World Within, World Without*

In 2010, the Victorian Government, with the support of City of Melbourne, and the Australian Government, commissioned mosaic artist, Helen Bodycomb, to create a monument as a place of commemoration and reflection for Forgotten Australians.

The *World Within, World Without* (2010) monument is located on Southbank Promenade in Melbourne and is made of slate, granite and glass. It acknowledges the pain, abuse, and neglect many children experienced in orphanages and homes, while honouring their strength as survivors.

The mosaic reflects the constellations above Victoria the moment former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd AC delivered the National Apology. The wattle blossoms represent the 1,000 most visible stars and planets: one star or planet for every 100 children who were in Victorian state care – 100,000 (estimation).

Event information

- There is a public toilet with disability facilities available about 100 metres from the memorial.
- Because the memorial site is in the heart of Melbourne, Forgotten Australians are encouraged to take public transport.
- Seating will be organised and available for Forgotten Australians.
- Open Place is unable to provide transport to and from the event.
- You are welcome to bring a guest. We encourage for that guest to be a Forgotten Australian – but understand if you need to bring somebody other than a Forgotten Australian.
- Each guest will receive a catered lunchbox including a cold drink. Please let us know if you have dietary requirements.

RSVP

Please RSVP to Richard Dove at info@openplace.org.au by Friday 6 November 2026.

Places are limited to 100. If you aren't certain that you'll be able to attend, we request that you leave the place free for another Forgotten Australian to attend.



You're invited to the

Forgotten Australians Memorial

in commemoration of the
17th Anniversary of the National Apology

Monday 16 November 2026

Time: 10:30am for an 11am start

Location: World Within, World Without
(Forgotten Australians) memorial on Southbank Promenade,
between the Sandridge Bridge and Evan Walker Bridge.
View in Google maps: bit.ly/fa-memorial-southbank

It's important to RSVP as **places are limited**.

RSVP by Friday 6 November 2026 by emailing
info@openplace.org.au or calling 1800 77 93 79.


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The 'World Within, World Without' memorial created by artist Helen Bodycomb honours the 500,000+ former child migrants and wards of the state – the Forgotten Australians – most of whom suffered institutional abuse. This artwork, made predominately from granite, incorporates the constellation above Victoria at the precise moment former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd AC delivered the National Apology to Forgotten Australians in Canberra: 11am on 16 November 2009.



Open Place Christmas Party – Reminder to RSVP

Thank you to everyone who has already RSVP'd for the Open Place Christmas Party on **Saturday 5 December, at the Malvern Town Hall.**

It's not too late to RSVP, so give us a call if you would like to attend! If you have RSVP'd but can no longer make it, please let us know.

Get ready to rock 'n' roll!

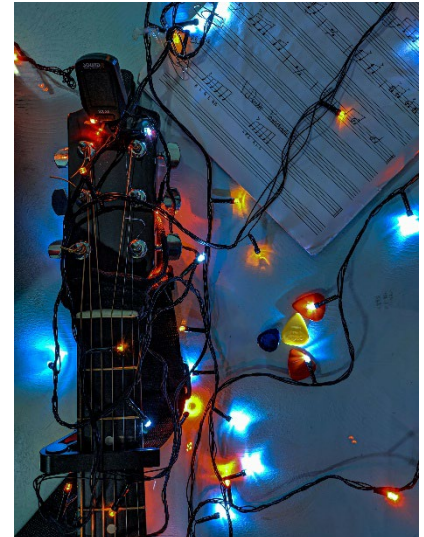
We're excited to welcome our very own Alan Bowles and his band for an afternoon of rock 'n' roll classics and party favourites from the 70s and 80s!

A Melbourne musician and member of 3 bands performing across Australia, Alan has entertained audiences nationally and internationally — so bring your dancing shoes because he's sure to have everyone up on the dance floor!

Alan is also a Forgotten Australian and a much-loved member of the Open Place community. When the Forgotten Australian Monument was unveiled at Southbank in 2010, Alan performed the moving song Forgotten (No More).

We're thrilled to have him on stage once again!

**Important note about the catered lunch: There will be vegetarian and limited vegan options available, however we cannot cater to all dietary requirements and allergies. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.*



Pick your party fit

Tuesday 24 November at 10am

Open Place is hosting its Christmas party celebrations on 5 December and Thread Together Clothing Hub are opening their doors to give you a chance to choose a brand new outfit for the party.

Thread Together collects brand-new, unsold clothing from fashion retailers across Australia and redistributes it to people who need it most – for free.

There will be snacks, drinks and some other surprises so you can mingle while you look through the beautiful clothes. Open Place and Thread Together have run this event for the past 2 years and has always been a fun and special day where everyone has left with a new outfit.

If you're interested and would like to book in or learn more, please contact Open Place on 1800 779 379.

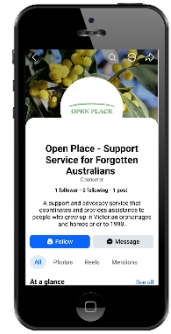




Follow us on Facebook

We're excited to announce that Open Place now has its own Facebook page, where we'll share news, upcoming events, updates from our drop-in centre and other information for Forgotten Australians. Follow the page to stay connected with Open Place and keep up to date with what's happening in our community.

Visit www.facebook.com/openplacevictoria or search for 'Open Place - Support Service for Forgotten Australians'.



Team updates

Community Education team

It's that time again! I'm amazed at how quickly this newsletter comes around! Looking back on what has happened over the last few months, there is still plenty to update you about. You'll see below, my work is focused on delivering on the **6 priorities** of the **to be seen** Forgotten Australians Community Education Report and Priorities – the things that you have asked for. For those who don't have a physical copy, please email me (Richard Dove) at rdove@rav.org.au and I'll send it out to you. You can also access it online at www.openplace.org.au/to-be-seen

So, what are some interesting things I can tell you about?

Uniting Age Well

Over the past few months, I have been supporting our Open Place Service Navigation and Advocacy team by providing presentations to managers and staff at the Uniting Age Well Community Hub, in East Burwood, on the *History and Needs of Forgotten Australians*.

Uniting Age Well is a major provider of Aged Care Services across Victoria and Tasmania (and Australia). They have applied and received 'specialisation verification' to specialise in working with Forgotten Australians/Care Leavers and they are keen to establish ways to support Forgotten Australians in the Aged Care system – including living in their homes for as long as possible!

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG)

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) specialises in the housing needs of older Australians and are located in Flinders Lane, Melbourne. Their aim is to create a society where all older people have secure, safe and affordable housing. Earlier this year, upon their request, I provided a presentation to HAAG staff about the history and needs of Forgotten Australians. It was well received. In July, HAAG invited Open Place to take part in an interview about Forgotten Australians on the 3CR 'Raising the roof' Radio Program which they host on a Wednesday evening. This went out to all those listening (many!) and we were told that over a thousand people access the podcast, as well. Getting the word out is what it's all about. You can listen to the interview at <https://www.3cr.org.au/haag/episode/remembering-forgotten-australians>



Special guests and new connections

We had two very special guests come to our Drop-In over the last month. Firstly, on 24 July, our Drop-In centre was visited by **Sophie Else**, a journalist and child abuse advocate with The Border Mail (Wodonga). Earlier in the year, I met with Sophie in a café in Wangaratta and I was impressed with her passion and desire to do more for Forgotten Australians. Her mother is a Forgotten Australian, so she has lived experience.

Sophie has been fighting for justice with her own child abuse case for many years. She's appeared on the ABC's 7.30 Report television program, as well as in several major newspapers. Now, she has a desire to write a series of articles across Australia about Forgotten Australians – and this formed part of the reason for her visit.

Our second special guest was **Rhiannon Heywood**, a Master of Public Health student from La Trobe University.

Over a period of months, I worked closely with lecturer Dr Sora Lee from La Trobe University to co-design an industry-led-assessment about Forgotten Australians. Rhiannon produced a fabulous essay, which included an interview with a Forgotten Australian, and we invited her to Open Place. The Forgotten Australians at the Drop-In were so kind to Rhiannon, and the experience was very meaningful for her. It was also a very rewarding experience for us all at Open Place.

Both Sophie and Rhiannon are now on the **Friends of Forgotten Australians** list and will be invited to future events. It's so important to have friends who will advocate for Forgotten Australian needs. Friends of Forgotten Australians are professionals and people in positions of influence who have shown a keen interest in getting better outcomes for Forgotten Australians.

Juries Victoria meeting

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with the **Juries Commissioner of Victoria, Mr Paul Dore**, and chatting with him about Forgotten Australians.

This came about because a Forgotten Australian spoke to our Service Navigation and Advocacy team about her experience of being summoned for jury duty. Paul was most receptive to my approach, and like most people had not heard of the term Forgotten Australians. From our conversation, he is organising for me to speak with his team about Forgotten Australians; and I have organised for Paul to come to Open Place and speak with our staff about how we can support you if you receive a Jury Summons. Learning is 2-way, and this is a good example of how important relationships are. I'll let you know how it all goes in the next newsletter!

Forgotten Australians online training program

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I'm continuing to work with our Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) Centre for Learning and Innovation, to design and implement an online training package for both internal staff and external organisations about the **History and Needs of Forgotten Australians**. I'll tell you more as it gets closer, but I just want to keep it on your radar so you're aware it is happening. It will be on our website, and you'll be able to access it. Australian child welfare historian, researcher, and author, Emeritus Professor Shurlee Swain, who was instrumental in setting up the Find and Connect program and wrote 3 papers for the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, is a subject matter expert who has provided some input and oversight. All going well, it should go live before the end of the year!



Are you a Forgotten Australian?

Together with the RAV Communications and Marketing team, we have developed, designed and printed a new poster titled 'Are you a Forgotten Australian?', which you can see on the next page. The poster will be distributed at A4 and A3 size throughout Victoria to general practitioners, community centres, health centres, hospitals, places of education. The purpose of the poster is to reach out to **Forgotten Australians who have not yet identified** or are not aware that there is support available. This is one of the things you have asked for and is Priority 3 of the **to be seen** report.

Some of you may want to get your hands of some of these posters to pin on notice boards around your community. If so, contact **Richard Dove** (me) at rdove@rav.org.au and let me know how many you'd like posted to you.

It's also available on our website: www.openplace.org.au/flyer/are-you-a-forgotten-australian



Are you a Forgotten Australian?



Did you spend time in an institution or out-of-home care as a child before 1990?

If yes, you may be eligible for free support from Open Place

Open Place is a support service for adults who as children spent at least 6 months in one or more of Victoria's child institutions or out-of-home care prior to 1990. There are a range of free services and supports available.

You can choose to use some, all, or none of our services—there's **no pressure or expectation to engage**.

Redress

Applying for the National and/or Victorian State Redress Scheme



Health

Up to \$1,250 in health support each year



Advocacy

Help with navigating services, organisations and departments



Records

A search for your records of time in 'care' and family records



Counselling

Up to 20 sessions annually with a qualified, supportive counsellor



Social

We run regular social support groups and other gatherings



Forgotten Australians may also be known as 'Pre-1990 Care Leavers' and other names.

Open Place programs and associated benefits are subject to eligibility and may vary over time.

Contact Open Place today to find out more

- Call **1800 779 379** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, or email info@openplace.org.au
- Visit our Drop-In Centre at 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond 3121
- Scan the QR code below or visit openplace.org.au

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The Open Place suite of services is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

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Counselling team

Our Counselling team has been working hard to make sure all Forgotten Australians, and their family members have access to counselling in Victoria and across Australia. We have a small team of counsellors who can see people in person at our Richmond office or work with people over the phone or via Zoom. We can also support people in regional and rural areas to find suitably qualified private counsellors in their local area and can help with the cost of the sessions. If you would like to know more about the Open Place Counselling program, you're welcome to call us at Open Place and ask to speak with a member of the Counselling team.

We would like to warmly welcome Beibei (see page 3) to our team, and she is looking forward to working with Forgotten Australians and assisting with their counselling needs.

Liz and Biraj would like to thank the Forgotten Australian men who participated in our first men's therapeutic group which ran for 4 weeks in August in Ballarat. Please see alongside a photo of 2 of our participants. It was a great group of men who connected, shared and learned from each other and we greatly appreciate the participation and feedback provided. We feel privileged to have been part of your healing journey.



Historical Records team

Recently, the Records team farewelled Sharon Guy. Sharon was a longstanding member of the Open Place Records team, and we wish her all the best in her retirement. Rest assured, if Sharon was supporting you with a records or family search, a member of the Records team will contact you to continue this work.

We continue to work alongside many Forgotten Australians to access their records and undertake family searches, and we apologise for the ongoing delays many are experiencing. We know how important and meaningful it can be to uncover information, make connections and better understand your own history. The team remain committed to supporting people through this process and progressing requests as quickly as we can. We thank everyone for their patience and understanding during this time.

In addition to working alongside Forgotten Australians registered with Open Place, our Records team also responds to enquiries from the Victorian public submitted through the Find and Connect website. Between July 2025 and July 2026, we responded to more than 400 of these enquiries.

For those unfamiliar with the Find and Connect website, its purpose is to help people find information about the institutions they lived in, where records are held, and how those records can be accessed. If you are interested in the history of the institution that you were in, you might like to visit the website for additional information: findandconnect.gov.au



Health Brokerage team

The new financial year has started, running from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027. This means our health funding has been restarted.

Please visit openplace.org.au/health-support to view the latest health guidelines.

Before you access a service or seek reimbursement, please contact the health brokerage team to confirm available funding.

A few friendly reminders for health:

1. If you are sending in receipts for reimbursement, we do need to have your current bank details on file. If you are unsure if we have this information, please provide your BSB and Account details with the receipt(s). If you would prefer us not to retain your bank details, please let us know and we will remove them from our records after use.
2. Unfortunately, with medical appointments that incur a Medicare rebate, we are unable to make third party payments. In these instances, you will need to pay upfront, and we can refund these costs, depending on available funding.
3. There is a limit of \$600 for costs relating to optical. Please note that optical costs come out of standard health funding and do not have a separate funding category/amount.

Redress Support team

Important news about Victorian Redress for Historical Institutional Abuse

The Victorian Redress for Historical Institutional Abuse (VRS) scheme has been extended. Applications can now be submitted up until the end of December 2026 (originally scheduled to close in June 2026).

Open Place Redress Support workers have supported over 400 Forgotten Australians to complete their applications for VRS. Our team has an in-depth understanding of the process and provides compassionate support tailored to your specific needs and circumstances. We will walk with you through every step of the process.

We would encourage any Forgotten Australians considering applying for VRS to contact Open Place as soon as possible, to make sure we can support you in a timely manner.

General information about Victorian Redress for Historical Institutional Abuse

If you experienced abuse and/or neglect as a child in institutional settings in Victoria prior to 1990, you can apply for Redress.

To be eligible, you need to meet the following criteria:

- lived as a child (before the age of 18) in a Victorian institution for at least 6 months (in total) before 1 January 1990
- experienced physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect in the Victorian institution.



If you apply and are found eligible, you will be offered:

- a payment of up to \$20,000
- a personal acknowledgement or apology
- up to 20 counselling sessions.

(If you have received a prior payment from certain schemes or institutions, the payment may be deducted from the \$20,000).

For more details, visit services.dffh.vic.gov.au/redress or call Open Place on 1800 779 379 and ask to speak with a worker about Victorian Redress.

Drop-In Centre

It's been a busy couple of months at Open Place Drop-In, with plenty happening and lots of opportunities to come together, have a chat and enjoy some time with others.

We recently held a World Cup Day when Australia was playing, which was enjoyed by everyone who came along.

As always, Drop-In is open 3 days a week, providing a welcoming space to drop by, have a cuppa, catch up with others and take part in activities. Our Friday Cook-Up continues to be a favourite, alongside our regular Oz Harvest food delivery.

There are always new activities, groups and events happening at Open Place, so keep an eye on our activities page on the website for the latest updates: openplace.org.au/events

We look forward to seeing you at Drop-In soon!





Women's Health Week morning tea

As part of Women's Health Week, Open Place hosted a special morning tea for Forgotten Australian women. Jean Hailes Women's Health Week is a great opportunity to check in with our health and wellbeing and make time for ourselves.

This year's 'Do It Anyway' theme was all about finding the motivation to take those small steps towards looking after ourselves, even when we're busy, tired or life gets in the way.

We had 7 Forgotten Australian women, along with staff, join us for a lovely morning of connection, conversation and some light-hearted health chats. It was a relaxed opportunity to come together, share a cuppa and spend some time focusing on ourselves.

We hope to make the Women's Health Week morning tea an annual Open Place event. If you'd be interested in joining us next year, please let us know so we can make sure to contact you!



For activity updates between newsletters, visit openplace.org.au/events



Social support groups (SSG)

Weather advice for Social Support Groups and outreach

Please be advised that when weather is forecast as catastrophic in your area, we will need to cancel any appointments or events. In an extreme forecast we may also need to cancel social support groups/outreach appointments. This is to ensure the safety of service users and staff.

Every effort will be made to advise of any cancellation as soon as possible.

We also recommend you download the VicEmergency App, the official Victorian Government app for real-time fire and emergency warnings in Victoria for your own safety.

In addition, you can tune into your local ABC Radio station for live updates during life-threatening events like bushfires, floods and cyclones.

Bacchus Marsh SSG

The group have had a couple of months of enjoying lovely meals at the Golden Fleece Hotel.

This month we met at the Darley Community Centre and had lunch, and we played bingo which everyone enjoyed. In October we will meet at Darley for lunch and do some planning for the next few months. A few people are talking about the Open Place Christmas party and looking forward to the day to enjoy a nice meal and some lovely entertainment.

Ballarat SSG

The Ballarat SSG has bid farewell to our dear friend and colleague Sharon Guy. Sharon will be greatly missed, but we wish her all the best in her retirement! The group is very pleased to welcome Annie Fell, who many of you will know from her many years at Open Place.

For some time now, our group has been held on the second Tuesday of the month. Due to changes in staff availability, the group is now held on the **fourth Tuesday** of the month.

In July, we took a trip to the cinema to see 'Glenrothan'. Set against the sweeping highlands of Scotland, it is a heartfelt drama about roots, reconciliation, and the ties that refuse to be broken. In August we were back at our home base, the Sebastopol RSL for a relaxed lunch and good conversation.

There has been much change within the Ballarat group recently, and Emma and Annie would like to thank the wonderful group members for their understanding and support.

If you would like to attend the Ballarat SSG, please contact Open Place to speak with Annie or Emma.



Bendigo SSG

If you live in the Bendigo area and have been thinking of coming along, please give Open Place a call to register your interest. We meet on the third Thursday of every second month (except January) at the Long Gully Community Centre and go on an outing the other month.

In May we went to Morning Melodies at the Bendigo Club. We danced, we sang, we mingled and we were treated to a delicious lunch. We will return!

In June we were back to Long Gully Community Centre for a meeting and lunch together.

In July we had lunch at The Belmont Hotel and an enjoyable day was had by all. The group welcomed Kristine Grant who is the new cofacilitator of the group – she and Annie will facilitate the group together going forward. Kristine is the coordinator of the Service Navigation and Advocacy team at Open Place in Richmond.

In August we were back at Long Gully for a meeting and lunch together.

In September we booked into the Marong Hotel for lunch.





Dandenong SSG

It's been a great few months of connection and fun amongst the Dandenong group. A highlight was our trip to Sorrento and ferry trip across to Queenscliff for fish and chips. It was a great turn-out and enjoyed by many. We have also had a lovely lunch at Lynbrook Hotel and tried out a new home base at Paddy O'Donohue Centre. Our group continues to grow, and Biraj and Ebba welcome anyone from Dandenong and surrounding suburbs to join us by contacting Open Place.





Frankston SSG

The Frankston SSG took a wonderful trip to the aquarium in July. It was a real highlight of the year, as we saw all kinds of beautiful tropical fish and some amazing looking sea creatures.

I'm also incredibly pleased to welcome Sharray as the new cofacilitator of the group.

The Frankston group runs on the first Friday of every month. If you're interested in attending, please contact Open Place reception to us know.

Geelong SSG

It's been a whirlwind of social activity for the Geelong crew! We're making the most of the local venues that offer good food and a convivial atmosphere.

In May, we enjoyed an all-you-can-eat buffet at an old favourite, The Gateway Hotel. It proved to be a formidable challenge not to go back for seconds and thirds of that luscious pavlova! Another month, we had lunch at the Shell Club, which was originally a tin shed that served the workers of the Shell Refinery, from its inception in 1952. In its present incarnation, it's vast interior chimes with hullabaloo! About 40 of us, from places as diverse as Colac and Ballarat, marked the beginning of spring, with a luncheon at the Fyansford Hotel. The hotel is a magnificent sandstone edifice, erected in 1854 situated along the Barwon River, and we sat in the atrium. The sun was streaming through as we struck a pose in the courtyard. In between our outings to glamorous locales, on alternate months, we can be found kicking up our heels at the Grovedale Community Hub. Next month in October we are playing bingo there.

So, if you live in the Geelong area, we heartily invite you to be part of our social support group. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month (except January). Please call Open Place to register your interest.





Horsham SSG

The Horsham social support group has had a wonderful first half of the year and the second half is gearing up to be just as spectacular. There is a downside though. One of our regulars, Vida, hasn't been well and we want her to know that we miss her deeply. Get better soon, Vida! We miss your kindness; your conversations; and the vegetables!

In July we went to the Natimuk Hotel. Natimuk is such a lovely little town. The owner and cook, Bill, is kind and looks after us very well. It's like a homecooked meal! In August we were off to the Bull and Mouth Hotel in Horsham. This writer didn't attend, but I heard the meal was sensational. Lastly, this month we are off to the Victoria Hotel – our collective favourite. Vida chose the 'Vic' and, even though she won't be there with us, we will certainly be thinking of her. October will see us heading out of town to Warracknabeal – Taylor's Palace Hotel. We are spoilt for choice in the Wimmera.



Preston SSG

The Preston social support group has enjoyed some lovely outings over the winter months!

In June, group members kept warm with a movie day at HOYTS Northland. Everyone could choose a movie they wanted to see from a few different options and enjoy some movie snacks along the way.

In July, we celebrated Christmas in July at the Darebin RSL Morning Melodies. Alicia O'Brien kept us entertained with Christmas songs and plenty of other classics. We enjoyed a delicious lunch, and a few of our group members even got up for a boogie!

We were also joined by our Service Navigation and Advocacy team coordinator, Kristine, while Lydia was away. It was lovely to have Kristine there and for some of our group members to meet her and have a chat.

We're looking forward to what the next few months bring and, as always, want to thank our group members for the fun and connection they bring to every get-together.





Gippsland SSG

The Gippsland group have continued to welcome new group members and enjoy each other's company each month. Lately we have had lunch at a local Chinese restaurant in Sale, enjoyed fish and chips, and just yesterday had lunch at Graze Bistro at the Sale Showgrounds and greyhound racetrack. Graze bistro made us feel very welcome and we feasted on 2 courses. Unfortunately, our group were not raffle winners, but hopefully we'll have better luck next time. We look forward to meeting at our home base in October and we are already making plans for our Christmas lunch celebration, which is sure to include ice cream.

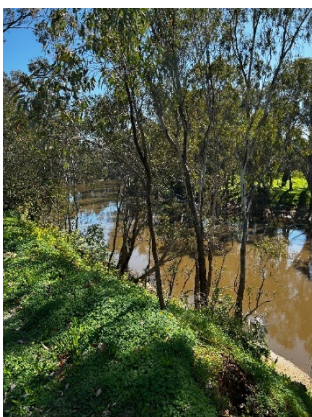
Shepparton SSG

As we look forward to warmer days, we look back on our cozy winter catchups in Shepparton.

In June the group met at the community centre for a light lunch and a good chat. In July we had a fantastic turn out for a pizza, pasta, salad, and soft serve extravaganza! The Pizza Plus restaurant in Shepparton gave a special opening for the Shepparton group, offering lots of space for the group to mingle and chat. Some wonderful reconnections were made, and memories were shared amongst group members on the day. We were back to the community centre in August where the group shared lunch with some great discussions about a range of local service providers and how we can better educate them about Forgotten Australians; we will continue to bring relevant brochures and books to the groups.

In September, the group took a little trip back in time at the Murchison Museum, where we saw lots of interesting items relating to the town and region's history, including a piece of the famous meteorite that hit in 1969. It was a beautiful sunny day as we strolled down the street to the famous Murchison Bakery and Tearoom for lunch.

We are looking forward to the next few months together in the Shepparton region.



(Goulburn River, Murchison)





Warrnambool SSG

If you live in the Warrnambool area and have been thinking about coming along, please give Open Place a call to register your interest. We meet on the first Wednesday of every second month (except January) at the Archie Graham Centre and the other month we go on an outing.

In May a small group of us went to the local pub in Terang for lunch and a catch-up with each other. It was a freezing cold, wet and windy day but a good day was enjoyed by all.

In June we were back at Archie Graham for a meeting and lunch together.

In July we went Ten Pin Bowling, and our gang were very impressive, striking down pins with skill and ease. We then walked across the road for lunch at Schnitz – the food was worth the long wait.

August took us back to Archie Graham for a meeting and lunch. We farewelled a much-liked member of our group, who passed away recently, by lighting a candle in her memory.

In September we made our way from near and far to have lunch at the Panmure Hotel. We have dined here a few times over the years, and it didn't disappoint. The open fire kept us warm while we mingled before our yummy lunch was served.





Wodonga/Wangaratta SSG

In June the Wangaratta and Wodonga social support group visited the wonderful Wodonga Plant Farm. The group enjoyed walking around admiring the beautiful flowers and plants. The group also spent some time at the farm's popular second handbook stall, chatting about various books. We then enjoyed a delicious lunch at their Garden Gallery Café.

In July we were back at our home base at the Victory Community Hall in Wangaratta. The group had lunch and had an open discussion and planned which movie we would be interested in watching in August.

In August it was time for the yearly Albury cinema and lunch activity. The group met at the Bended Elbow Hotel for a splendid lunch and walked over to the Albury Cinema. In the previous month the group decided on watching the movie 'The Odyssey'. I heard some good reviews about the movie although the duration was 3 hours. In September the group was back at our home base at the victory community hall.

If you live in Wodonga, Wangaratta or the surrounding areas and you wish to join our group please feel free to contact Open Place. We would love to have you join us.





Simple tomato pasta recipe

Serves 4.



Ingredients

- 2 tbs olive oil
- 25g butter
- 8 vine-ripened tomatoes, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 375g spaghetti

Method

1. Heat oil and butter in medium saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add tomato and garlic and stir to combine. Season generously.
3. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 mins or until slightly reduced.
4. Cook spaghetti in a large saucepan or boiling water following the package directions or until al dente.
5. Drain, add to the pan with the tomato mixture and toss to coat.
6. Divide pasta among serving bowls and sprinkle with basil and parmesan to serve.



Suggestions

We welcome any suggestions from you on how we can improve our services to better suit your needs.

Maybe you have some ideas for our social support groups, newsletter, Richmond Drop-In Centre, or our workshops/activities.

Contact us and let us know.

We would love to hear from you!

Contact us

If you would like **information** about your current services or want to share your **suggestions**, find out how Open Place can **support** you, or **subscribe** to receive this newsletter by email, please contact us.

- Free call **1800 779 379**
- Visit openplace.org.au/contact-us
- Email info@openplace.org.au
- Write to us at:
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We acknowledge the pain and loss of childhood experienced by Forgotten Australians and we recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma.



We pay respect to First Nations Peoples of Victoria as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways. We acknowledge the pain caused by colonisation including disconnection from land, loss of life and freedom, and the forced removal of children.



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