

## Annual Report 2015- 2016

Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) is a national alliance of Forgotten Australians and supporters, who work in partnership to advocate for and promote national policies and services to meet the needs and interests of Forgotten Australians.

Forgotten Australians are a group of around 500,000 Australians who, as children, were placed in orphanages or Homes or other forms of Out-of-Home-Care in the 20th century.

### **Vision**

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians is committed to recognition and healing for Forgotten Australians and encourages their active engagement in the development of policy and services which are person centered and strengths-based and which create opportunities and pathways which improves the lives of Forgotten Australians.

### **Mission**

AFA's mission is to promote and encourage greater recognition for Forgotten Australians. AFA advocates for national policies and high quality services available in each State and Territory which are tailored to meet the needs and interests of the estimated 500,000 Forgotten Australians. AFA strongly encourages inclusion of Forgotten Australians in service planning and delivery. AFA delegates seek to improve outcomes for all children and young people affected by current child protection systems and policies.

### **History**

Formed in 2006 the Alliance was a collection of Forgotten Australians and supporters who, under the umbrella of Families Australia, undertook a national advocacy role. AFA was instrumental in the development of the Find and Connect service, the national Museum exhibition, INSIDE, the booklet "Forgotten Australians and has made a major contribution to policy development for Forgotten Australians in the areas of health and aged care. AFA was actively involved in the development of the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse and has made a number of contributions to the deliberations of the Commission.

In November 2014 AFA became an incorporated body with a small amount of funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS). It had its first AGM in November 2015 and has conducted its first full year of business, led by its Board and executive.

## **Governance**

### ***AFA Governance structure for a national peak body advocacy service***

AFA is a peak body, made up of ‘any funded support service organisation whose primary purpose is to provide direct support to Forgotten Australians on a daily basis’. It is constituted as a peak body, made up of a combination of Forgotten Australian service providers and Forgotten Australians. It is not primarily established to act as a vehicle for broad participation by Forgotten Australians.

Its membership has a majority of Forgotten Australians who also constitute a majority on the Board.

The federal government (via DSS) funds AFA to bring a united voice to policy discussions. AFA is incorporated under the ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991 and subject to the ACT Associations Incorporation Regulations 1991. It is a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

This legal status has benefits for AFA in enabling it to operate autonomously, limiting its tax liabilities and limiting the liabilities of individual members.

The decision making structure required by the Associations Incorporation Act and Regulations supports the national advocacy role of AFA.

### ***Leadership by Forgotten Australians***

The funded support services that become General Members of AFA must have ‘an active Forgotten Australians advisory group.’<sup>1</sup>

The General Members can nominate representatives – one member from the funded service organisation and two members from that funded service organisation’s Forgotten Australians advisory group.’ The majority of representatives are Forgotten Australians.

The Forgotten Australian representatives are currently appointed by the advisory group in their state or territory. The advisory group will nominate on an annual basis representatives who are best able to represent them on AFA. There is no restriction on time limits for representatives unless otherwise determined by the AFA constitution.

### ***Participation by Others***

If AFA needs other skills or knowledge, it can appoint affiliate non-voting membership to other individuals and organisations ‘with specialist skills and who are able and willing to contribute to the achievement of the Objects of the Association.’

### ***Representation of all States and Territories***

AFA is managed by a Committee of Management (the Board) appointed from the membership. Currently there is at least one Board member from each state and territory’s service.

### **Chairperson’s report**

This is the first full year for AFA as a stand-alone and incorporated body. Much attention has been paid to governance and planning issues and establishing roles and responsibilities for the Board and its membership.

The environment for Forgotten Australians remains turbulent and uncertain. It is an environment that for many has been dominated by the deliberations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. During the 2015-16 the Royal Commission published its final report on Redress and Civil Litigation. AFA has spent much time pursuing and advocating for the recommendations contained in this report.

AFA believes that the next 12-18 months provide a window of opportunity for justice; by way of redress, by transparency of civil litigation practices and by improved access to health and aged care services.

In order for this opportunity to become reality all Forgotten Australians will have to work together. Too much time is spent by Forgotten Australians on the internal politics of the Forgotten Australian world. By and large this is unproductive time and does nothing to bring about justice that is so needed.

It has been a privilege to serve as the Chairperson of the Alliance. I thank you for this honour.

Caroline Carroll

### **Secretary’s report**

The challenge for AFA over this 12 month period has been to create a coherent sense of national purpose for the organization and to provide systems and procedures that will allow the activities relating to this national purpose to be delivered.

Governance issues and settling the new membership and the newly elected board into clear and differentiated roles and responsibilities has taken up an enormous amount of time, particularly of the chairperson and the secretary.

AFA has prepared submission to the Royal Commission (redress) and to the Victorian consultation paper on redress. AFA has appeared at a number of Royal Commission roundtables (out of home care and support services) and at the public hearing on redress.

Advocacy and community education activities have continued but these have largely been locally generated and focussed. The challenge remains to bring a national theme to these local initiatives. There is one good example of a national advocacy activity; the development of redress post cards that can be used across Australia. A copy of the post cards is attached.

Following the Board meeting in March it was agreed that it was vital that AFA develop a strategic plan and work plan for 2016-17. It was agreed that AFA would engage the services of a consultant, Barbara Romeril, who in conjunction with the Chair would visit every state and territory to consult with the membership about the strategic direction of AFA. The consultation was also an opportunity for the membership to provide advice about how AFA could undertake its national advocacy work while utilizing its state and territory based membership.

In the course of April and May the Chair and Barbara Romeril visited every State and Territory Find and Connect service.

This resulted in the development of a draft strategic plan and other supporting documentation.

The draft strategic plan was discussed at a membership meeting in June and then endorsed by the Board at a subsequent meeting.

The direction and details in this plan will provide a foundation for AFA to move forward into 2016-17.

Again much of the attention of AFA has been internally directed. One of the major issues facing AFA is how to devolve authority and resources to the members in each state and territory.

After much discussion a draft funding document has been developed which allows AFA centrally to directly fund activities (that fit the strategic direction of AFA) via the state and territories Find and Connect service. This direction has been approved by the Board and is waiting ratification from DSS

Despite much effort being concentrated on governance and relationships local advocacy work continues.

### ***Victoria***

Victoria has produced a set of post cards that are being used to make the case for a redress scheme. These have been distributed to all AFA members for use at a local level.

Post cards attached.

Community education with the following groups: Housing services (Wombat Housing, Housing Choices and Vincent Care), Aged Care (Wintringham, COTA), Community Health (Richmond and Eastern Access) and prison (Hopkins Correctional service)

Meetings with MPs, Jenny Macklin (ALP), Martin Foley (State MP) and Sharon Knight (State MP) to discuss redress

## **NSW**

A feature of activity in NSW has been the Loud Fence displays. Two flyers advertising these events are attached.

## ***Tasmania***

Forgotten Australians have been working on putting together an exhibition at the State Library depicting the experiences of Forgotten Australians. They have organised the exhibits and done most of the negotiation with the State Library, and the exhibit is currently in place for the month of August.

Forgotten Australians have been working with the Find & Connect Support Service to re-format the Drop-in meeting, looking at regularity, venue and activities.

David Henderson has been designing and producing a range of materials to promote awareness of Forgotten Australians including stickers, t-shirts and Find & Connect collateral

## ***Western Australia***

*If you call going to Bunbury to talk with [F.Aus](#), in that neck of the woods and let them know about what We are all about and some of the things We are trying to do for Them.*

*Plus on another matter got Three Street People into cheap housing and onto centre-link so they can afford the rent. One was a forgotten Australian. I had some old furniture in the shed. They are over the moon out of the cold and wet weather and getting the right help they need. A report from Gordon Hill, WA Forgotten Australian rep.*

## ***South Australia***

The service celebrated the 8th State Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. The event was well attended and provided opportunities for Forgotten Australians to get together and remember the past, including people who died as a result of their childhood experiences and all who have contributed to making a difference in the future. The Consumer Reference Group (CRG) works closely with Elm Place to organize these events and is active in putting forward the agenda for change. Priorities for South Australia are currently the action are the Aged Care project to raise awareness of Forgotten Australians, their histories as well as highlight the need for trauma informed practice in the aged care sector. The CRG also wrote to the Royal Commission highlighting the issues for people in aged care and requesting that all forms of abuse are included in a Redress program.

## ***Queensland***

- Monthly training with all officers within the Department of Child Safety on the historical context of the out of home care systems and the lessons we can learn from the those with a lived experience
- Banners printed and distributed by an individual member of AFA. Shared with others to display at events and special occasions. The member also took a tour

throughout Australia finding opportunities to engage people in dialogue about the impact of the institutional care system and historic abuse

- Letters written to members of both the state and federal parliaments about creating opportunities for dialogue for a national redress scheme
- Distribution of documentation which provides a National Framework for Justice
- Ad-hoc opportunities to speak with, provide information to peers by both Queensland members of AFA. Many people are confused about what is happening with discussions for redress and find information gathering from their peers easy and accessible

Simon Gardiner  
Secretary

### **Treasurer's report**

I present the financial results for the Alliance for Forgotten Australians at 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

The financial activity for the year reflects the strategy with a net result for the year is \$69,219.

Grant income from the Department of Social Services was expended to actively promote the awareness and represent the needs of Forgotten Australians.

Expenditure during the year was as planned.

I have confidence in the financial accountability and thank the Board and staff for their support and work.

Karyn Walsh  
Treasurer

### **Financial statement**

Provided. See separate document.

## **AFA in 2015 - 2016**

### **Board**

- Caroline Carroll, Chairperson (Victoria)
- = Pamella Vernon, Vice-President (NSW)
- Karyn Walsh, Treasurer, Queensland
- Simon Gardiner, Secretary (Victoria)
- Allan Allaway (Queensland)
- Nicole Cunningham (NSW)
- = Karen Wilson (Tasmania) replaced by David Henderson, May 2016)
- Mergo Ray (South Australia)
- Josephine Littlehawk (South Australia)
- Gordon Hills (Western Australia)
- Heather May (Northern territory)

### **Members**

- Michael Collins (Queensland)
- Barbara Lane (NSW)
- Jules Carroll (Tasmania)
- Steven Page (South Australia)
- Karen Randolph (Western Australia)
- Kaye Lewis (Northern Territory)

### **November 2016**