
2021-22

ANNUAL REPORT



ALLIANCE FOR
**FORGOTTEN
AUSTRALIANS**

BACKGROUND

The 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 an estimated 500,000 Australians who spent a period of time as a child in a children's home, orphanage, asylum, foster placement, training school or any other form of residential out-of-home facility in Australia before the end of 1989.

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-centred and strengths-based, and which create opportunities and pathways to improve the lives of Forgotten Australians.



MISSION

AFA's mission is to support Forgotten Australians to amplify their collective voice and ensure active participation nationally, drawing on lived experience by:

- (a) **Advocating** for appropriate past, present and future policies, programs and services that impact the lives of Forgotten Australians and children in the system since 1989;
- (b) **Educating** elected representatives, policy makers, professionals, academics, and the general community, on the lived experience, past and present, of Forgotten Australians; and
- (c) **Promoting** recognition and inclusion of the past experiences, injustices and impact of the legislation, policies and practices on the lives of Forgotten Australians as children and adults.

HISTORY

Formed in 2006, the Alliance is a group of Forgotten Australians and supporters who undertake a national advocacy role. AFA was instrumental in the development of the national network of Find & Connect support services; the National Museum of Australia's exhibition Inside: Life in children's homes and institutions; the booklet Forgotten Australians and DVD Forgotten Australians life stories; and has made a major contribution to policy development for Forgotten Australians in health and aged care. AFA was actively involved in lobbying for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and made a number of submissions to the Commission. AFA was represented on the Independent Advisory Council on Redress; the Reference Group for the National Apology to Victims and Survivors on Institutional Child Sexual Abuse; the National Memorial Advisory Group; and the Aged Care Grief and Trauma Consultative Group.



CHAIR'S REPORT

CAROLINE CARROLL OAM

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact our work in 2021-22. AFA's Board continued to meet using video conference, and was able to hold two face to face gatherings with our broader member group.

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians' short film, *Open Doors*, was finalised. *Open Doors* is the story of Bill, a Forgotten Australian, and his first night in residential aged care. We see Bill's anguish as memories of his institutionalisation as a boy return, and we gain an insight into Bill's trauma as he realises what it means to turn a full circle in his life. *Open Doors* is a hard-hitting film aimed at provoking an emotional response and awareness of the challenges many Forgotten Australians are enduring as they age.

Sadly, Covid-19 continued to impact *Open Doors*, and while filming concluded, the planned launch had to be postponed. The launch moved online and we were pleased that our Patron, The Hon. Jennifer Coate AO, launched *Open Doors*. Plans are advancing to release the film accompanied by educational material to support integration of *Open Doors* into residential aged care worker education.

In January 2022 we farewelled our much admired and hard-working Executive Officer, Boris Kaspiev. Boris worked with AFA for four years, and was instrumental in supporting AFA's national advocacy and amplifying the voices of Forgotten Australians across the country. We thank Boris for his skills, compassion, friendship and solidarity.

As we expressed our deep gratitude to Boris, the Board was delighted to welcome Sheree Limbrick back to AFA as Senior Advisor, Policy & Advocacy. Sheree worked alongside Victorian Forgotten Australians in the lead up to and after the Senate Inquiry and was instrumental in the design and establishment of Open Place.

A specific focus of the Board this year has been working on governance reform and sustainability of AFA into the next 5 years. Important changes in this regard are imminent and we look forward to sharing more details in the near future.

AFA continues to be represented on a number of important bodies including the National Aged and Community Care Roundtable, National Memorial for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Group, National Redress Scheme Roundtables, Elder Rights Advocacy and Older Persons Advocacy Network.





SECRETARY'S REPORT

KARYN WALSH AM

The Board met three times in 2021-22 as Covid-19 restrictions continued to impact our ability to meet face to face. The Executive met twice.

Simon Gardiner, former Manager of Open Place (Vic), resigned as Secretary in August 2021. We thank Simon for many years of support and commitment to Forgotten Australians and the work of AFA. Simon continued to support AFA and Forgotten Australians through the Coordination of our Life Stories Project which you can read more about later in this report.

At the 2021 Annual General Meeting, Daryl Higgins (Forgotten Australian NSW) was elected to the Board.

We were delighted during the year to celebrate with Board Member Pamella Vernon her well deserved induction as a Member of the Order of Australia for services to social welfare.

Thank you to my fellow Executive members for 2021-22:

Chair	Caroline Carroll OAM	Forgotten Australian Vic
Deputy Chair	Pamella Vernon OAM	Forgotten Australian NSW
Secretary	Simon Gardiner (to Aug 2021)	Open Place Vic
Secretary	Karyn Walsh AM (from Aug 2021)	Micah Projects Qld
Treasurer	Reg Casley	Lanterns WA
Exec member	Kevin O'Neill	Forgotten Australian SA

TREASURER'S REPORT

REG CASLEY

I present the financial results for the Alliance for Forgotten Australians to 30 June, 2022.

The financial activity for the year reflects the budget strategy, with a net result for the year an underspend of \$50,771.00

The underspend reflects a small balance from the previous years' carry forward underspend, approved by Department of Social Services to be spent on four specific initiatives. The timing of the approval process resulted in two of these initiatives being delayed until 2022-23. These initiatives will see AFA document and publish the history of AFA and its influence on social policy and services for Forgotten Australians as well as the creation of educative resources to support the use of AFA's short film, *Open Doors*.

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

In the last quarter of 2021-22 we implemented a new accounting software platform to increase efficiency and accountability.

Our financial systems and reporting are supported ably and professionally by LDB Accountants & Advisors.

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

Life Stories PROJECT

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

The Life Stories Project made it possible for 60 Forgotten Australians to tell their life story. The completed stories have been printed with photos and documents. Each Forgotten Australian has received 20 copies of their story. The Forgotten Australian is the owner of the story and decides who should receive a copy of their story.

The Life Stories Project was made possible by a grant from the Department of Social Services. The grant was initially made for a year (1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021) but was extended twice as a result of impacts of Covid-19. The Project finished on 30 June 2022.

The Project had the following aims:

- enabling and empowering participants, via storytelling, to claim or reclaim their identity;
- assisting participants, via storytelling, in their emotional and psychological recovery; and
- assisting participants, via storytelling, to reconnect with family.

AFA commenced this project with an awareness and a sensibility to the value of life story work, but also the risk. A project such as this must do no harm. In undertaking the project, AFA firmly believed that “the act of constructing stories is a natural human process that helps individuals to understand their experience and themselves” (Pennebaker and Seagal, 1999, p 1243).

The Life Stories Project developed a model for storytelling that ensured the support and wellbeing of participants. The project recruited and supported a group of writers with knowledge of and experience in working with Forgotten Australians.

The project successfully met its target of 60 completed stories.

Feedback from participants and writers suggests that the Life Stories Project met its objectives. As part of the wrap up of the project, a report will soon be published on AFA's website which includes lessons learned and suggestions for future life story work with Forgotten Australians.

AFA acknowledges all those who participated in the Lift Story Project, first and foremost, the Forgotten Australians for their courage and wisdom.

We also thank the writers for their skills and sensitivities and the Find and Connect service network for their support.

And finally, we thank Simon Gardiner for his coordination of the project, his patience, collaborative approach and his ongoing advocacy on behalf of and with Forgotten Australians.



GOVERNANCE

BOARD

Chair	Caroline Carroll OAM	Forgotten Australian Vic
Deputy Chair	Pamella Vernon OAM	Forgotten Australian NSW
Secretary	Simon Gardiner (to Aug 2021)	Open Place Vic
Secretary	Karyn Walsh AM (from Aug 2021)	Micah Projects Qld
Treasurer	Reg Casley	Lanterns WA
Exec member	Kevin O'Neill	Forgotten Australian SA
Member	David Henderson	Forgotten Australian Tas
Member	Daryl Higgins (from Nov 2021)	Forgotten Australian NSW
Member	Gordon Hill	Forgotten Australians WA
Member	Heather May	Forgotten Australian NT
Member	Michelle McDonald	Open Place Vic
Member	Yvonne Porter	Wattle Place NSW

MEMBERS

Les Batchelor OAM JP	Forgotten Australian Tas
Suzanne Burke	Forgotten Australian WA
Valadia Cooper	Forgotten Australian Qld
Le-ella Doyle	Early Intervention Services Tas
Maree Holt	Forgotten Australian Vic
Luci Lovelock	Elm Place SA
Taylah Peters	Adult Specialist Support Services NT



ALLIANCE FOR
**FORGOTTEN
AUSTRALIANS**

PATRON

The Hon Jennifer Coate AO

PO BOX 374

CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

0488 460 646

admin@forgottenaustralians.org.au