

FEDERAL APOLOGY ANNIVERSARY EVENT NOVEMBER 2013

Wattle Place has successfully hosted the fourth annual anniversary event (15.11.13) to commemorate the Federal Apology made to Forgotten Australians on 16.11.09.

The event was attended by 30 Forgotten Australians at the outdoor memorial area to Forgotten Australians in the Sydney Botanic Gardens. The rain held off during the formal ceremony despite a threatening forecast. This gave time for people to listen to a commemorative acknowledgment, place flowers around the memorial plaque, take part in reading lines from the official Apology speech and observe a minute's silence.

All received a calligraphy copy of the Apology and a commemorative pin at the end of the ceremony. Participants enjoyed a wonderful lunch and while enjoying the excellent food, had time to connect with each other and share stories.



GROUP CALENDAR 2014

JANUARY TUES 21 Sydney Harbour Cruise	FEBRUARY TUES 18, 25 Improve Your Self Esteem 6 week course	MARCH TUES 4, 11, 18, 25 Improve Your Self Esteem 6 week course	APRIL TUES 8 Mount Tomah Botanical Gardens Bus Trip
MAY (DATE TO BE SET) Parra Girls—Riverside Theatre	JUNE FRI 6 Leatherwork Workshop	JULY FRI 4, 18 Telephone Group	AUGUST FRI 1, 15 Telephone Group
SEPTEMBER FRI 19 NSW Apology Barbeque	OCTOBER TUES 7 Nepean Belle River Group	NOVEMBER FRI 14 Federal Apology Trip to Botanical Gardens	DECEMBER Tues 2—Surviving Xmas Thurs 18—Xmas Party

RSVP essential to 1800 663 844

Please don't hesitate to call if you would like further information about any of the group activities

 **FIND & CONNECT** NEW SOUTH WALES



Relationships Australia
NEW SOUTH WALES

NSW SUPPORT SERVICE
FOR FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS

NSW
GOVERNMENT

67 High Street Harris Park NSW 2150
Freecall: 1800 663 844
Phone: 02 8837 7000 Fax: 02 9633 5395
Email: wattleplace@ransw.org.au
Website: www.nsw.relationships.com.au

HELPFUL CONTACT LIST

Care Leavers Australia Network
(CLAN) 1800 008 774 or 0425 204 747
support@clan.org.au www.clan.org.au

Aftercare Resource Centre
(The Arc) 1800 656 884

Link Up (NSW) Aboriginal Corporation
02 4579 1911 or 1800 624 332
linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au www.linkupnsw.org.au

The Special Search Service
02 9211 6491 or 1300 667 366
specialsearchserviceNSW@aue.salvationarmy.org

International Social Service
(ISS) 02 9267 0300



Wattle It Be

Newsletter - 5 January 2014

Newsletter For Wattle Place

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter

WATTLE PLACE MANAGER



My name is Nicole Cunningham and I am the new Manager at Wattle Place. I have joined the service in December 2013, and it was great to meet many of you at the Christmas party.

I have worked for over 15 years in the field of torture and trauma, both on the front line doing casework and counselling to managing services for Red Cross across NSW. I have a passion for social justice and Human Rights advocacy.

I have been drawn to the work at Wattle Place due to my own family history of institutional 'care' on both my mother's and father's side of the family. Some of that history has been very difficult for my family to talk about, and is still being uncovered today.

I am looking forward to working with you all over the next year, and hope to meet with you over a cuppa at Wattle Place. Wishing you all the very best for a Happy 2014! Nicole

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

I have had the privilege of being a support person during private sessions at the Royal Commission and have been given some valuable feedback relating to the experience of the participants. Participants have said that attending the Royal Commission has been helpful in the way of having an opportunity to be heard and have their experience acknowledged. They have expressed hope that by giving their personal account, changes will be made to prevent their experience happening to any other person in the future. Private sessions enable the Commissioner/s to hear first hand the impact of child sexual abuse in a confidential and private setting. The private sessions run for approximately one hour and a debriefing session is available after you tell your story. Your support person can attend the debriefing session with you.

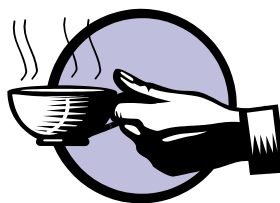
What has been useful for participants is to prepare what they would like to say beforehand by either discussing it with a trusted person or by writing it down. The Royal Commission website has some useful guidelines about this on their website at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/tell-us-your-story. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the Commissioner, your support person can read your statement for you or speak on your behalf. Your safety is of the utmost importance and the Royal Commission private sessions have taken measures to ensure this.

As a support person I have witnessed immense courage as the participants have shared their story, often for the first time to a person outside of their support network. I have been inspired by the strength, relief, resilience and weight of burden carried by the participants. I see the hope that the many 'parts' experienced in the process in healing will help the survivor feel whole again.

Siobhan Counsellor/Caseworker

WATTLE PLACE MORNING TEA

If you have some free time on a Thursday morning why not pop around to Wattle Place for morning tea between 10.00am and 11.30am. Coffee, tea and cake/biscuits will be provided. This is a great opportunity to have a chat and catch up with your friends and fellow Forgotten Australians.



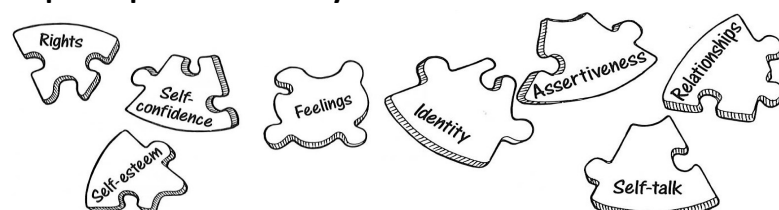
BECOMING CONFIDENT AND ASSERTIVE COURSE

This course was developed by NSW Health and will introduce you to well tried strategies to improve your feelings of self worth. It is based on the belief that people of all ages can develop skills to feel more confident and express themselves assertively, thus improving their ability to communicate well with others. Individuals who have good self esteem and can express themselves assertively have a greater sense of well being and are better able to withstand the strain of crisis, trauma, and stress.

Contents of the Course

- Self esteem and its sources
- How to build self confidence instead of putting ourselves down
- Self talk - developing awareness of how our thoughts can hinder or help us
- Feelings - understanding and working with our feelings
- Assertiveness - how all of the areas above are linked, to help us feel good about ourselves and be better able to speak up in a pleasant way, rather than becoming aggressive or bottling things up
- Rights - your rights and the rights of others
- Relationships - how to keep a balance in interpersonal relationships
- Identity - who am I, what do I want and where am I going?

The course will be held at Wattle Place on Tuesday mornings for 6 weeks commencing on Tuesday 18th February. Dates: Tuesday February 18th & 25th, March 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th. 10:15am – 12:30pm A light lunch will be provided. A Workshop Manual will also be provided to all participants. Please note that there will be a maximum of 8 participants and that you need to be available to attend all 6 sessions - Bookings are essential.



COMPUTER PALS

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association

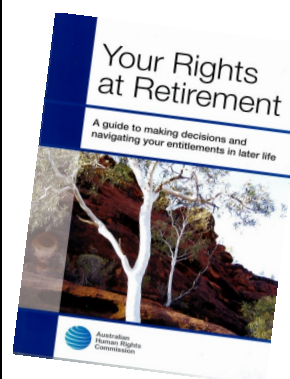
Computer Pals is a not for profit organisation established to assist seniors (and others) access technology. Learn how to set up your computer and printer, connect to the internet, set up an email account, surf the net - these are just a few of the applications that Computer Pals can assist you with.

It costs \$35 to become a member of Computer Pals with \$10 per two hour lesson. This money assists with running costs of the centre. Wattle Place may be able to help you with these costs. There are Computer Pals groups located in every state of Australia. See www.ascca.org.au (or call Wattle Place and we will help you find the club closest to you).

Computer Pals Blacktown: Discover Your Device Seniors Week 15th - 22nd March, 9am - 5pm (Drop in and check them out)
Unit 1/9 Kent St, Blacktown or phone 0432 218681



YOUR RIGHTS AT RETIREMENT



The Australian Human Rights Commission have produced a useful guide for people approaching or at retirement age which gives guidance and information about support, services and rights for older Australians. Free copies of the book can be obtained from the Commission via its website at www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/your-rights-retirement or by phone at 02 9284 9600.



REGIONAL NEWS AND EVENTS

- ♦ "Big Day Out", organised by "The Open Door Social Network", Newcastle, Thursday, 13th March. For details contact Donna Germon on 0401 539 882.
- ♦ Lismore Group meets 2nd Friday of the month at Lismore Workers' Club at 1pm. Phone Barbara on 0408 769 766 for details.
- ♦ Border Social Group meets at Albury Wodonga on 4th Saturday / Sunday. Phone Dennis on 0455 163 860 for details.

If you know of, or are organising, any events, please let us know so that we can include details of these in future editions of the newsletter.

REQUESTS FOR COPIES OF FILES

One of the services Wattle Place offers to Forgotten Australians is helping with requests for copies of files relating to a person's time in care as a child.

Files relating to children who were in care between the 1930s and 1980s are not all kept in one central location. Different records for different homes and institutions are stored in different places. For example, the surviving records of the various government homes and institutions from New South Wales are held by the Department of Family and Community Services and can be accessed via the Care Leavers Records Access Unit, but records relating to homes run by religious organisations may be held by the church authorities of the church involved. Other organisations may still hold their own records for the care homes which they administered. Today, services are aware of the importance of keeping full and accurate records but this was not always the case in the past. It is therefore important to be aware that the amount of information recorded in files can vary greatly depending upon the institution and time period in question. This means that files from one home may be large and detailed, whilst files from another home may be very bare. For some homes it is often the case that all that is recorded in the files are the basics of when the child was admitted and discharged from the home. Indeed, in some cases files may not be available because the records may have been lost or destroyed.

It also takes time for applications for copies of files to be completed. Some organisations have maintained their records well and have databases listing all of the children found within their records. It is therefore easy for them to locate relevant files and arrange for copies to be made, usually within a few weeks. Other organisations are perhaps not so organised, or simply have a large number of requests to deal with, and so take very much longer to respond to requests for copies of records. It is therefore essential that if you believe you will need your files by a particular date, you should speak to your caseworker/counsellor as soon as possible so that there is enough time for the application to be completed.

WATTLE PLACE CHRISTMAS PARTY 2013

The Wattle Place Christmas Party was held on Thursday 17th December and nearly 100 Forgotten Australians turned up for the celebrations. It was a lovely summer's day and a great chance to meet up with old friends, make new acquaintances, share the festive spirit, and enjoy a nice Christmas lunch.

The Christmas Party is always a popular event in the Wattle Place calendar so make a date in your diaries for this year's celebration which will be held on **Thursday 18th December 2014**.

