

# OPEN PLACE

Support Service for Forgotten Australians

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2010

## NEWS FROM OPEN PLACE

### WELCOME

Welcome to the first Newsletter of Open Place, the new Victorian Support Service for Forgotten Australians.

We know this has been a very long time coming for many of you and acknowledge the many years of advocacy from so many of you that has resulted in this Service.

However, we have worked very hard and very quickly, since the tender outcome was announced in mid-September to enable Open Place to open on 16 January 2010.

With the support of the Victorian Government and funding provided through DHS, we are determined that our partnership will enable the best possible services for Forgotten Australians.

Sandie de Wolf  
Chief Executive Officer  
Berry Street

Michael Hunt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Relationships Australia  
Victoria



We are delighted to announce that Minister Lisa Neville will officially open *Open Place* on

**Thursday 18 March at 9.30am to 11.00am**

This is an event for Forgotten Australians with morning tea provided.

We plan to hold a more informal “open house” for *Open Place* in early April for professionals, friends and supporters of Open Place.

**Please note:** *Representatives from the Media will be at the opening on the day and they will have been fully briefed about our policy at Open Place of not taking photographs of people without the express permission of each individual.*

**RSVP**—So that we have a rough estimate of the number of Forgotten Australians who wish to attend the opening on March 18, we would be grateful if you could call Tracey (1800 779 379) at Open Place to let her know of your intention to come

### OPEN PLACE HOURS OF OPERATION



Monday & Tuesday	10.00am—5.00pm
Wednesday	12.00pm—7.00pm
Thursday & Friday	10.00am—5.00pm

Don't forget to use our Free Call number  
**1800 779 379**

We decided to have one night opened a bit later so people who had trouble coming during the day could have the opportunity of visiting and speaking to our staff. Let us know what you think—we're really flexible!

**Suite 1 / 8 Bromham Place, Richmond 3121**

**Free Call 1800 779 379**

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## Victoria Wide Consultations

Throughout the year staff from *Open Place* will be conducting consultations with Forgotten Australians across the State. The purpose of these consultations is to hear directly from Forgotten Australians about their individual experiences, wishes and needs so that we can ensure that the services offered by *Open Place* are shaped by those experiences. We expect to be able to develop new ideas for new services after hearing from Forgotten Australians around Victoria and we want the consultations to directly influence the way we deliver our services. The consultations are also a way of letting Forgotten Australians around the State know about *Open Place* and what we have to offer.



In late February and March we will be holding consultations in the following locations:

### Ballarat

**When:** Wednesday 3rd March  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Central Highlands Regional Library –  
Ballarat  
178 Doveton Street North,  
Ballarat 3350  
Ph 5332 2615  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Traralgon

**When:** Thursday 11th March  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Traralgon Neighbourhood House  
11-13 Breed Street, Traralgon  
Ph 03 5174 6199  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Lalor

**When:** Thursday 25th February  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Spring Street Hall  
2A May Road, Lalor  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Geelong

**When:** Thursday 25th February  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Grovedale Community Centre  
45/47 Heyers Road  
Grovedale 3216  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Shepparton

**When:** Thursday 4th March  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Country Comfort Shepparton  
481 Wyndham Street  
Shepparton  
Ph 03 5821 5822  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Melbourne

**When:** Wednesday 10th March  
**Time:** 4.00pm—6.00pm  
**Where:** Open Place, Richmond  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

### Frankston

**When:** Saturday 27th March  
**Time:** 1.00pm—3.00pm  
**Where:** Frankston Library Community Room  
60 Playne Street  
Frankston (near Frankston station)  
**RSVP:** Tracey 1800 779 379

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In June and July we plan to visit Footscray, Box Hill/Ringwood, Hamilton, Horsham, Swan Hill, Wodonga and Sale as well as holding a consultation centrally at Open Place. In October and November we plan to visit Heidelberg, Dandenong, Geelong, Warrnambool, Mildura, Seymour and Leongatha. **So do keep an eye on this space and also in your local papers about forthcoming Open Place consultations.**

## Questions & Answers

**Q. I spent five years in a Victorian Children's Home from when I was 10 years old, but I have lived in Western Australia since I was 19 years old. Am I entitled to any services from Open Place?**

Yes, you are entitled to all the services that we provide. These services includes your access to counselling, access for immediate family members to counselling support for up to 12 months, financial assistance with Medical/Dental needs and to support Life Skills development, as well as support to access your records and assistance with travel for family re-unions within Australia. A Support Worker from Open Place is available to help you prioritise your needs and assist you with any applications.

**Q. I was raised in a NSW orphanage and have lived in Victoria since 1972. Am I entitled to services from Open Place?**

A. You are entitled to access our drop in services and support. However you cannot access the specific financial support for counselling, Medical/Dental and Life skills development or for Travel and Reunions. This type of support is only for Victorian Forgotten Australians. Support staff will provide

advocacy and support for you to access your records and will contact our Interstate colleagues to help you with your entitlements from other State Governments. At Open Place we offer a daily duty service, on site counselling and access to the Internet.

**Q. What does Life Skills mean?**

A. Generally speaking this means courses, materials or equipment that may enhance opportunities to socialise and participate in community life to a greater extent than you might currently enjoy. For each person this is likely to be different. Some applicants may want an opportunity to take up a hobby that they have always wanted to do such as quilting or photography while others may want to undertake a TAFE accountancy course or an aerobics course with a view to employment. The support worker at Open Place will help you with your applications and can discuss the advantages of different opportunities.

**Q. Can Open Place provide Financial Assistance for me to complete a Teaching Degree?**

A. Open Place does not have the resources to provide that level of financial assistance. However we can support you with assistance for books and materials and it is worth having a discussion with a Support Worker about what we can do to facilitate your course work.

## Staff Profiles

### Joanna—Manager

Hi, my name is Joanna and I am lucky enough to be the Manager of Open Place. I come to this position after working for Berry Street for five years as the Director of the North and West region. I began my career in London over 35 years ago and have worked with children, families and individuals across all the different aspects of the welfare system including Family Support, Mental Health, Housing and Out of

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Home Care. I feel very privileged to be appointed to this role and I look forward to working with you to develop the services and facilities here at Open Place. I have supported Essendon in my time but have an enduring loyalty to Arsenal.....

## **Tracey—Manager of Admin**

Hello everybody, I'm Tracey and you've probably already spoken to me over the phone or when you've dropped in to Open Place (have I made you a cuppa yet?) I have a background in Administration and also have a Diploma of Welfare. For the past 2 1/2 years I have worked in the Berry Street Richmond office as the Manager of Administration and jumped at the opportunity to work with Forgotten Australians. I really wanted to be part of this exciting and very important service and have enjoyed every minute so far—everyone has been so welcoming. I'm also an avid Carlton supporter. I look forward to speaking to many of you over the phone or meeting you at our drop in centre or our Support Group meetings.

## **Lyn—Support Worker**

Hello my name is Lyn, I'm a Support Worker at Open Place. My role is to help people with their enquiries about the new service and about what Forgotten Australian may be able to apply for.

My last job was at Odyssey House Victoria, which is a Drug & Alcohol treatment centre. I am the wife and sister of Forgotten Australians.

I really look forward to meeting and talking with you and helping you to access supports and services. I am a football tragic – I am a football tragic – My team is the western Bulldogs (Go Dogs)

## **Carlie —Records & Reunions**

Hi my name is Carlie and I am the Records and Reunions worker here at Open Place. I look forward to supporting those of you who would like to search for your records and/or trace family members. I have spent the last four years working with families and children to improve family relationships and prevent family breakdown. Prior to that, I worked with young adolescents in residential care. I have a background in early childhood development and trauma and attachment and am currently studying therapeutic art techniques. I am a Geelong girl but I DO NOT SUPPORT THE CATS!

## **Robyn —Counsellor**

Hello, my name is Robyn and I am a qualified Counsellor. Most recently I was employed at Berry Street in the North and West Region, working with adolescents and their families. My role at Open Place is to provide counselling to individual Forgotten Australians and to their family members. I can also help to find a counsellor that lives close to your home. I am enthusiastic about running groups at Open Place on topics that interest you such as managing stress. I am very happy to be working at Open Place. I want Open Place to be a safe and supportive environment for people to use and enjoy. Please drop by to say hello, or call me to make a time to catch up.

## **Caroline—Snr. Support Worker**

My name is Caroline and many of you will know me from Vanish/Interim Service. I hope to get to know many more of you in the future.

I spent my first 15 yrs "in care" and was subjected to many abuses and deprivations that many Forgotten Australians suffered.

I cannot believe that something that bad has led me to **OPEN PLACE** and the privilege of working with and for Forgotten Australians.

The new service is not the end of the road, I think of it as an achievement for all the hard

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work that has gone before.

I would like to acknowledge every F/A who has ever written a letter or rung a politician, told their story to the Senate Inquiry and / or the Media, stood on the steps of parliament, or who came regularly and loyally to support groups. It is each and every one of you who has made a difference for all F/As. It is your courage and commitment and your “never give up” attitude

that has seen the National Apology and now this new service happen to help improve the lives of Forgotten Australians.

And in the words of our Prime Minister “there is much more work to be done!”

## Update on the Memorial

The mosaic artist Helen Bodycomb is constructing the Victorian Forgotten Australians Memorial which will be placed at Southbank when completed. The work, developed by Helen in consultation with a working group, will be a dignified and striking, yet simple work.

The work will honour a range of experiences and will be a landmark; both as a meeting place and an art work that raises public awareness of Forgotten Australians. The work is a sculpture that features mosaic inlaid into black granite;

evocative of a constellation of wattle blossoms, as seen against the night sky. The polished granite will be inset into

the horizontally cut face of a large slab of Castlemaine slate (approximately 3 meters in size). Helen is basing the placement of each blossom on the planetary and stellar constellation that was in our sky at 11.00am



on 16 November, 2009, when Rudd gave his apology to the Forgotten Australians. The City of Melbourne will be installing the work. As soon as the installation date has been determined, an unveiling event will be organised and advertised.

## Who Am I?

### Project —Pathways

<http://www.pathwaysvictoria.info/>

On 3 December 2009, the first version of Pathways was launched at the University of Melbourne. Pathways is an online resource for people who as children were in out-of-home 'care' in Victoria.

Pathways tells the story of institutional 'care' in Victoria from its beginnings in the 1840s through to the present. It includes stories and images that describe key institutions and auspicing agencies, public figures, legislation and policies, events, with links to significant publications and record holdings.

You will not find personal information or private records in Pathways. The website contains only information that is already published and/or in the public domain. However, Pathways can help to locate where personal records may be kept by government departments or past providers of 'care'.

## Meeting to discuss Service

### Development—5 February 2010

Amendments to the Code of Conduct included:

- Turn off all mobile phones during meetings
- Permission before passing on an email address to a third party
- The Code of Conduct is applicable to all Open Place facilities—including use of computers

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Joanna presented the regional consultation meetings (see under "Victoria Wide Consultations")  
There was further clarification about the eligibility criteria (see under "Q&A")  
There will be a Service Development meeting following the first round of Regional consultations.

## Workshops

### Stress Management

**WHEN:** Wednesday 28 April

**TIME:** 5.00pm—6.00pm

Come to Open Place and chat with Robyn to learn about how stress affects you and what you can do to overcome it. Only 12 places available for each session, so ring Robyn early to book your place

### Open Place Cook Up

Join us for a cook-up at Open Place.

Learn a new recipe, share a meal and take some home (if there's any left).

Meet new people and learn some new skills.

**WHEN:** Friday 26th March

**TIME:** 11.00am—2.00pm



### NO COST INVOLVED

Please call and register your interest with Carlie or Lyn on 1800 779 379

## Are you interested in a workshop???? Read on...

Over the next few months, we are planning to run a Basic Computer skills workshop and a Creative writing workshop.

If you are interested in being a part of either of these workshops, please ring Lyn or Caroline on 1800 779 379 and we'll be able to give you more details of dates and times etc.



## Our Website Volunteers wanted

Open Place is developing a website. We need input from Forgotten Australians. If you're interested in helping us, please come to a website development meeting at **Open Place on Wednesday, 3rd March at 4.00pm.**

**Got any ideas for other workshops or groups which you think would be useful?**

**We'd love to hear of them—please let us know by calling 1800 779 379**

## Read all about it

Open Place Newsletters 2010.....

4 all together

**FEBRUARY / MAY / AUGUST / NOVEMBER**

## Photo's from the Apology

We would love if anyone could provide us with photo's taken on the day of the apology so we can use it for a display at Open Place. We are happy to copy and return them back to you. Please call either Lyn or Caroline if you can assist.

Please ring Tracey or email [info@openplace.org.au](mailto:info@openplace.org.au) for any contributions for the next newsletter due in early May.

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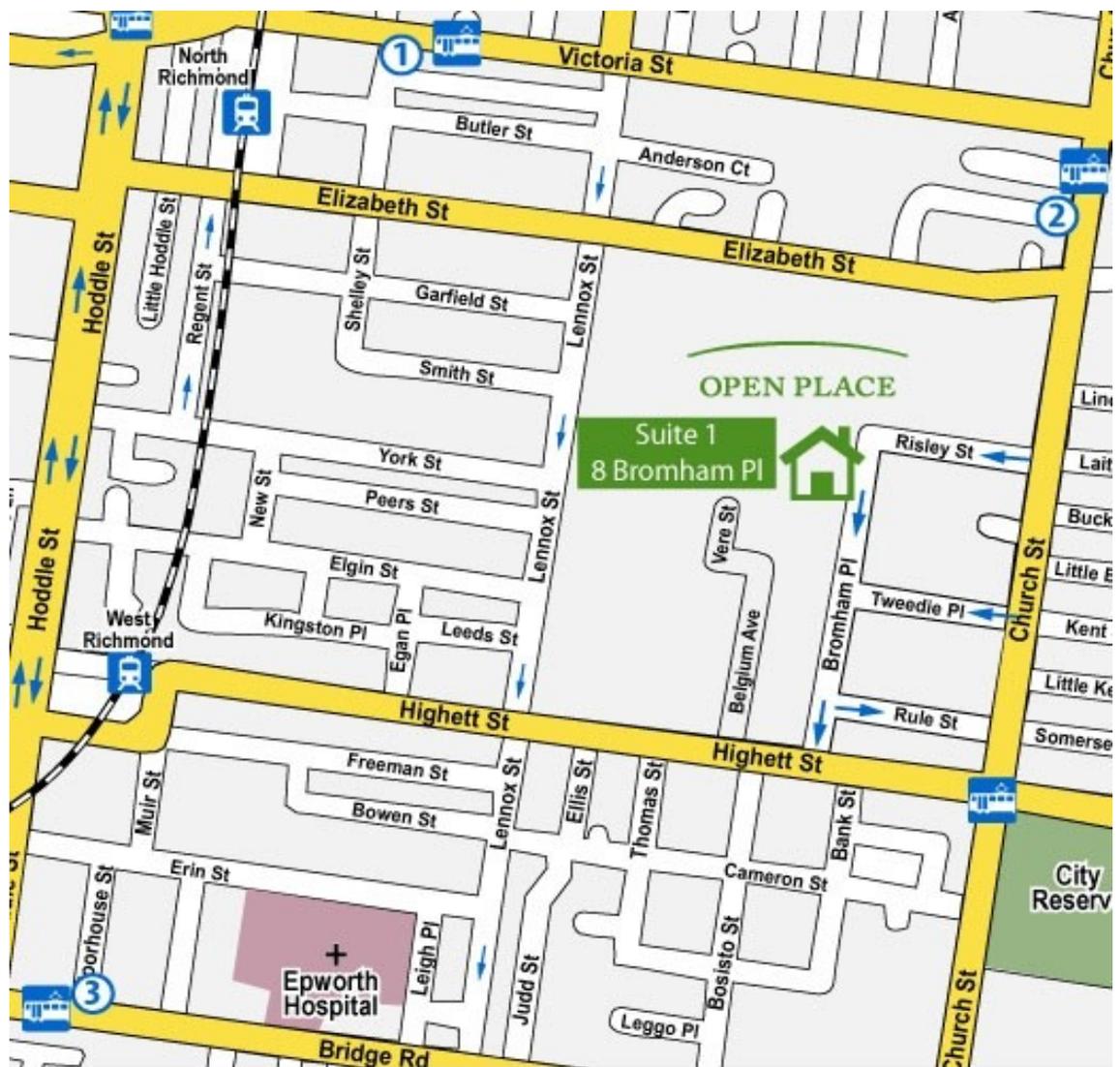
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## OPEN PLACE—MAP

How to get here..... Suite 1 / 8 Bromham Place, Richmond



**Trams:** ① 109 - Box Hill - Port Melbourne  
42 - Box Hill - Docklands

② 78 - Prahan - North Richmond  
79 - St Kilda Beach - North Richmond

③ 48 - North Balwyn - Docklands  
75 - Burwood - Spencer Street