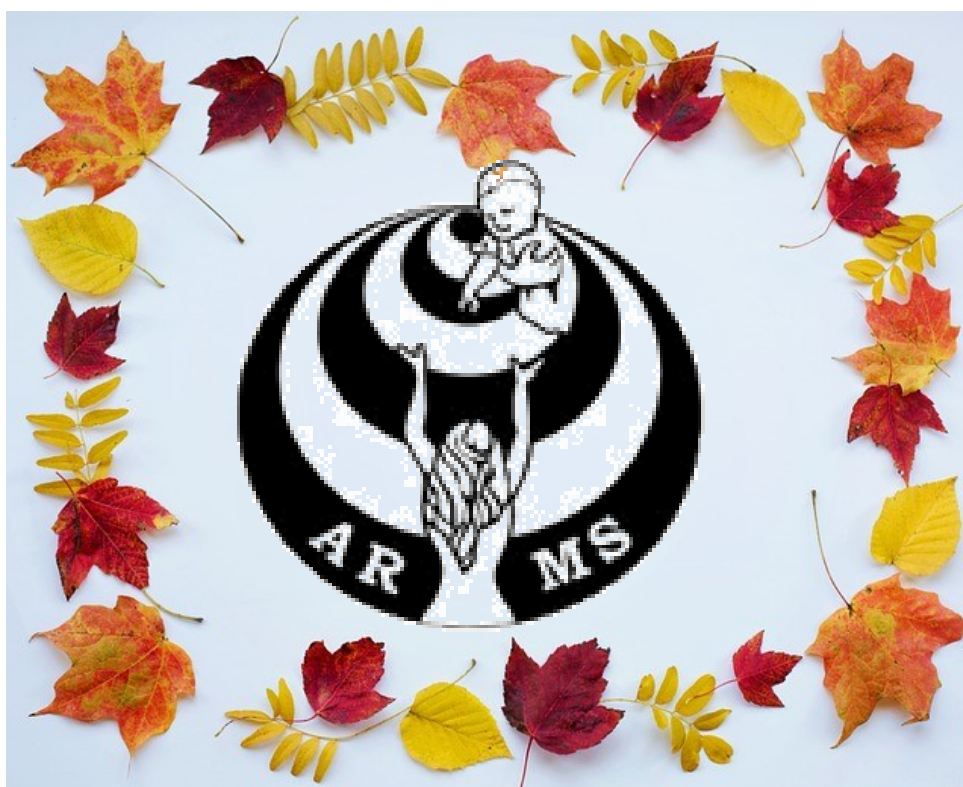




ARMS AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

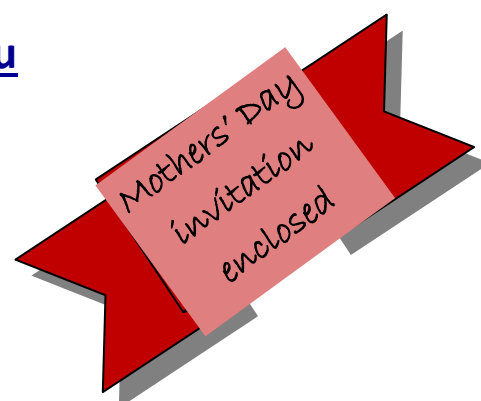


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Hello

Ladies and welcome to our Newsletter.



What fabulous weather we had for Easter 2021. People were at the beach and out and about enjoying our summer rush. Very lovely and great timing. Of course the Mornington Peninsula almost sank with the number of merry makers enjoying our lovely environment here.

It is lovely to have some extra members on our Committee. Barbara McCombie and Jenny Theile are such welcome additions - thank you ladies for joining our Committee.

The Committee is changing over our phone provider to make use of a very well priced deal with Aldi. This will certainly assist our budget and will not alter our phone service.

Those of you who attended our Zoom AGM in March (for 2020) would have greatly enjoyed our guest speaker Margaret Van Keppel. She talked about her life's work and she certainly has made a great contribution to how adoption practice has been influenced since her 1982 research paper with Professor Robyn Winkler – The Adjustment of Relinquishing Mothers in Adoption. Her support for us mothers was undeniable.

The committee has contacted the Royal Women's Hospital with regard to the fees they charge women who want their own medical records from their confinement. There has been no response so far but we will persevere! We believe it is unacceptable to be charged for our own records and information, particularly given the Women's role in taking our babies.

Our Booklet devoted to the unveiling of our Taken Not Given Memorial has been printed. Members will be contacted about receiving a copy. It will be a precious and welcome keepsake for us to treasure.

The eighth anniversary commemoration of our National Apology for Forced Adoptions was held on March 21st 2021, at our Taken Not Given Memorial. This went very well. Thank you to those who attended.

Digitising all of ARMS' records is an enormous job. We are grateful to have been given funding through the FASS grant program. Many hours have already been spent sorting the huge store of documents but there is still a great deal to do. Thank you to those Committee Members who are working on this.

The National Network Committee is still a work in progress. We are still looking for representatives in some states who would be happy to take part.

The Victorian Inquiry Hearings are being conducted now. If you are called into your own personal hearing and would like any kind of support please call us, or even if you would just like to debrief. ARMS is here for you. The Inquiry Committee is holding regional hearings as well.

Thank you to ladies who have contributed to our Newsletters in the past. I'm sure we all like to read of others' accounts and experiences. It helps our own experiences to feel "normal". All contributions are valued. This is your Newsletter so please feel comfortable sending us anything you have.

Now I go back to the main distraction in my life at the moment, 8 puppies that were produced by my gorgeous standard poodle Zsazsa three weeks ago. They are tiny little dark apricot doggies 7 boys and 1 girl. Very cute and entertaining. I will try to include a photo (difficult to take a good photo.)

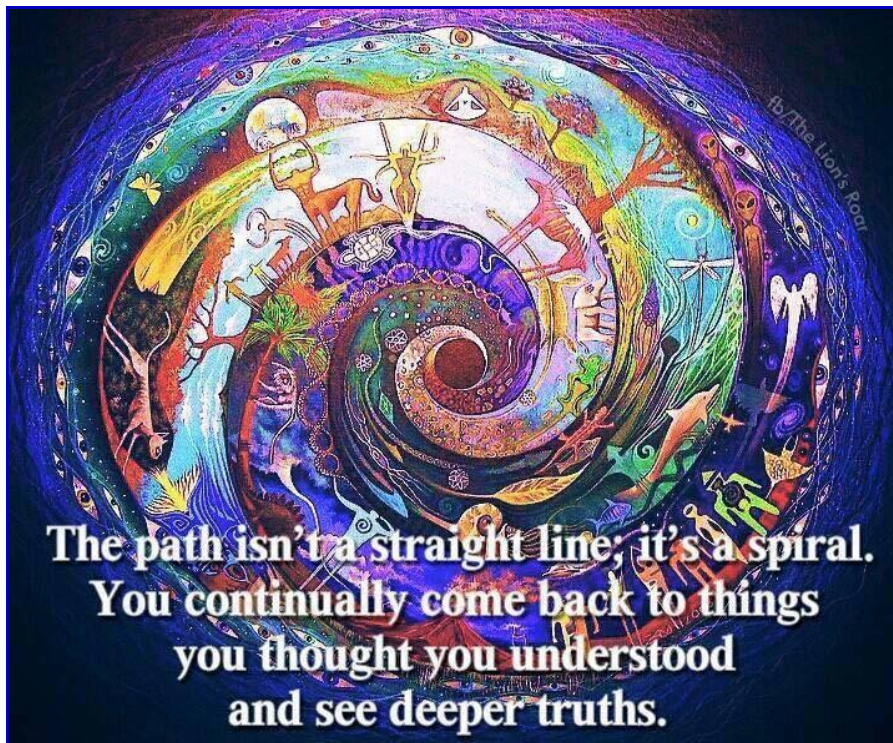


Zsazsa's eight puppies

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, keep well everyone.

Faye Burnham





News from Canada

Bernadette Eileen Dumas-Rymer, a Canadian mother who lost her child to adoption wrote recently that The Catholic Church in Vancouver is preparing an apology and is seeking her input re wording, etc. She has taken the opportunity to ask the Catholic Church to join in **A Worship Service of Apology and Lament on Mothers' Day, May 9th 2021**. This Worship Service was developed by the United Church in partnership with ORIGINS Canada. Bernadette asked that the Worship Service be advertised in the BC Catholic newspaper and on their website, accompanied by an article to provide background information. She also requested Archbishop Miller to include in his Mothers' Day message mothers who have lost their children to adoption, adding *"We are not 'birth' mothers, or 'biological' mothers. We are mothers who have suffered and continue to suffer the trauma and loss of our babies because of past practices sanctioned by the Catholic Church, yet we remain unrecognized as mothers by the Catholic Church"*.



As well as the ARMS telephone number 0400 701 621 the following committee members are happy to be contacted (between 9am and 9pm) on their personal phone numbers:

Faye Burnham	0411 865 836
Jo Fraser	0409 442 701
Dorothy Kowalski	0411 098 773 03 9889 3583

My wish is that it didn't happen –

That I didn't get pregnant when I was too young and naïve to fight for the rights of my child and myself

That I didn't have to live my whole life full of regret about my own baby living with other people and me not knowing him

That he didn't have to grow up separated from his own family That the cloud of grief that has hovered over us both was not a part of our life experience.

But, all that I wish didn't happen, has happened, and as we only get one shot at life as we know it, then there are choices to be made. I am a mature person now.

I can choose to enjoy standing up and acknowledging my son I can choose to be very real and honest with him

I can choose to include him as part of my life and my family's life to the extent that he wishes

I can choose to accept that he has a loyalty to two families and we all have a place in his life

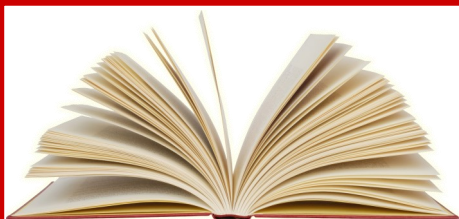
I can emotionally embrace him as My child

I can give him as much love and acceptance as he needs.

And together we can make a difference for each other.

I emailed Jigsaw for permission to use this article and asked if they knew the author. The reply was from the author herself, Ann Allpike who said *"You're welcome to reprint the article. I wrote it a long time ago when I was full time at Jigsaw. These days I'm semi-retired although I still do the newsletter. I guess it was written in a moment of reflection and regret when I was thinking about what could have been. These days I reflect more on what I have"*.

Dorothy



I recently read Alannah Hill's account of her childhood and her career beginnings "Butterfly on a Pin". Alannah is one of our more famous fashion icons. She discusses her complex and at times terrible relationship with her mother and the difficulties of her fairly harrowing childhood that actually made Alannah who she is. She did not actually realise that her mother loved her until after her mother had died. It is a very good read that I would recommend to anyone but do not expect a fairy story. I have always admired her unique style of fashion. The one statement from the book that grabbed me and made a lasting impression was later on in her book.

"I understand we are all responsible for our own lives. We can blame other people and expose all the people who've hurt us, but in the end the decision to forgive and evolve is ours and ours alone."

Faye Burnham

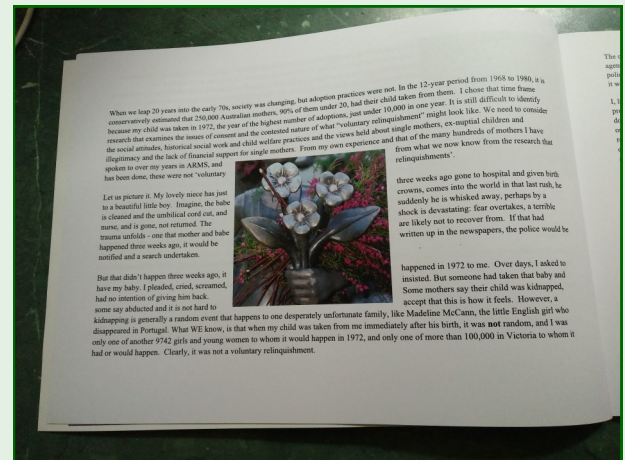
8th Anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions



Sunday 21st March was the eighth anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions. A beautiful balmy Autumn week preceded the day, and, as Murphy's Law would have it, "late afternoon showers" predicted for Sunday became early morning/all day drizzle! Nonetheless, around fifteen stalwarts braved the weather, umbrellas in hand, and joined us at Taken Not Given to acknowledge the anniversary. Marie Meggitt spoke eloquently, and we spent a couple of hours enjoying each others' company. We welcomed some new participants, and were delighted when a man approached us toward the end telling us that he had seen our banner and wanted to let us know that he had just come from lunching with his "birth mother" and full siblings. Synchronicity.



Unveiling of *Taken Not Given* booklet



The ARMS committee is delighted to announce that the booklet of the unveiling of *Taken Not Given* has been printed and will be distributed to all those who would like a copy. It has been a long, laborious process and we thank FASS and RAV for providing us with the grant money to achieve this. We are delighted with the finished product and hope you will see it as an emotional and treasured memento of an historic day in Victoria's history. It is an acknowledgement of our loss, and governments' and agencies' parts in this, and a commitment from the Victorian Government that this will never happen again.



Hidden Mothers, Lost Innocents

A memorial to acknowledge mothers and their babies who were adopted.

Unveiling ceremony
Saturday 26th June 10:30am for 11:00am 2021



The 'hidden mothers' denotes the historical intention of various authorities involved in past forced adoptions, to conceal the identity of mothers in maternity homes across Australia.

The 'Lost Innocents' refers to the associated stigmatisation of the mother and child, for the mothers were mostly young teenagers while every child is innocent.

Elizabeth Brew 2021

DECLARATION OF PROFOUND LOSS

We the undersigned
MOURN the loss of our children
TAKEN FOR ADOPTION
MOURN the loss of our families of origin
DENIED US BY ADOPTION
MOURN the loss of our brothers and sisters
CAUSED BY ADOPTION
MOURN the loss of grandparents
DENIED US BY ADOPTION
MOURN the loss of our rightful position in life
DECREED BY ADOPTION.

Janice Kashin 2008

Where:

St. Anthony's Family Day Care formerly
St. Anthony's unmarried mothers' home.
P: 02 9747 5782 Ext: 007
5 Alexandra Ave, Croydon NSW
(parking at the back)

RSVP: Please send your name and contact number to Lynne Williamson
margwill5@icloud.com
0421 460 417
(02)49 543020

*RSVP: Limited to 50 people, pending covid restrictions.
Formal invites to be sent 2 weeks prior to the ceremony.*

Funding from DSS received through the RANSW Forced Adoption Support Service
"The Cherub" sculpture by Steve Glassborow and kindly cared for by The Sisters of St. Josephs.
Supported by Adoptee Rights Australia Inc. (ARA)

DISCLAIMER::

All contributions are presented with the aim of sharing ideas. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily endorsed by ARMS




ARMS (VIC) CALENDAR 2021

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS 1st Saturday of every month (except January)

6 th February	Re-starting Support Group	2pm Support Group
6 th March	2020 postponed AGM	1.30pm to 4.30pm
<i>To be advised</i>	<i>Recognition of Anniversary of National Apology on 21 March 2013</i>	
3rd April		2pm Support Group
1st May	ARMS Special Mothers Day	1pm to 3.30pm
5th June		1pm Winter start time – Support Group
3rd July		1pm Winter start time - Support Group
7 th August		1pm Winter start time - Support Group
4 th September		2pm Support Group
2 nd October		2pm Support Group
<i>To be advised</i>	<i>Recognition of Anniversary of Victoria Apology on 25th October 2012</i>	
6 th November		2pm Support Group
4 th December	2021 AGM	1.30pm to 4.30pm

Meetings held at **Level 5, 50 Market Street**
(Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare)
Near cnr Flinders Lane & Market Street
 Melway Reference 1A G8. Flinders St & Collins St trams: Both Stop 3





YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO
THE ARMS SPECIAL



MOTHERS' DAY CELEBRATION

on SATURDAY, 1st MAY 2021

Level 5, 50 Market Street Melbourne
(Centre For Excellence in Child and Family Welfare)
Near corner Flinders Lane and Market Street. Melway Ref 1AG8.
Flinders Street and Collins Street trams: Both Stop 3

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 pm | Welcome drink |
| 1.30 pm | Special Mothers Day Support Group |
| 3.30 pm | Afternoon tea, provided by the Committee |



We are looking forward to welcoming some of the mothers from any and all of
Victoria's widespread regional areas.

RSVP 26th April 2021



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Dorothy Kowalski ph: 0411 098 773

