

Forced Adoptions Implementation Working Group

Communiqué #1

The first meeting of the Forced Adoptions Implementation Working Group was held in Hobart on 9 July 2013.

The group will play a key role in providing advice to Government on the implementation of services to support people affected by forced adoptions.

With their significant experience and expertise, the group's aim is to ensure that the Australian Government response to the Senate Inquiry into Former Forced Adoptions Policies and Practices is well implemented.

The outcomes from the first meeting are as follows:

- All states and territories will be informed the Implementation Working Group has been established and an outline of the important work the group will undertake will be provided.
- All members of the Implementation Working Group signed confidentiality agreements and endorsed the Terms of Reference. It was also agreed that communiqués will be available on the Forced Adoptions page of the Department of Social Services website following each meeting to ensure the public can keep up to date with the work of the Implementation Working Group.
- The Implementation Working Group will shortly draft a Statement of Purpose, which will outline the key principles and practices to which they will adhere as they progress through their work.
- The Implementation Working Group provided in-principle support for the Service Response Scoping Study that will scope the current service system and highlight gaps and opportunities to strengthen the system so people affected by Forced Adoptions can be better supported. The Implementation Working Group is looking forward to working closely with the Department of Social Services and the consultant who will undertake this important study.
- National Archives of Australia presented an update and discussion on the approach to collecting personal experiences of Forced Adoptions for their website, raising awareness about the website to the broader community and the related education package. National Archives will continue to work closely with the Implementation Working Group as this project is developed over the coming months.

- The Implementation Working Group is also eager to work closely with the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department to progress issues around birth certificates and access to records.
- Similarly, the Implementation Working Group is keen to work with the Australian Government Department of Health on issues around access to mental health services and developing guidelines for mental health professionals who work with people affected by Forced Adoptions.
- The Implementation Working Group will have a key role in ensuring all stakeholders and interested parties have the opportunity to be involved as this work develops and can provide their feedback and advice.

To stay up to date with opportunities to participate, please email forcedadoptions@dss.gov.au and request to be added to the distribution list so you can receive regular updates.