

## Media Release

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### Alliance for Forgotten Australians – new group launched to support survivors of institutional care

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians (AFA) will be launched by Democrat Senator Andrew Murray, at 12 noon on Tuesday 16 October, in the Senate Alcove at Parliament House. Media are welcome.

The people who identify as Forgotten Australians are survivors of the institutional care system, which was the standard form of out-of-home care in Australia until the 1970s. At least 500,000 children grew up, or spent long periods of time, in orphanages or Children's Homes between 1930 and 1970.

A Senate Inquiry in 2004 allowed many people who had been children in the Australian institutional care system to tell their stories – often for the first time. The Committee "received hundreds of graphic and disturbing accounts about the treatment... experienced by children in out-of-home care... Their stories outlined a litany of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and often criminal physical and sexual assault... neglect, humiliation and deprivation of food, education and healthcare." (*Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children, xv*)

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians brings together existing funded and unfunded organisations that currently support Forgotten Australians, to form a new "umbrella" group - a united, national advocacy body that aims to improve State and Territory responses and services and make them more consistent. Senator Murray is the Patron of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians.

Mr Allan Allaway and Ms Caroline Carroll, spokespersons for AFA, expressed appreciation of the support received from the Australian Government; \$100,000 has been provided this year. Projects AFA will deliver include a booklet that will give health and other professionals the background information they need to recognise, relate to and assist people who are experiencing long term trauma because of a childhood spent in orphanages or Homes. A website is also under construction and will be demonstrated at the launch.

Mr Allaway noted the need for continued funding: "Whilst the Government has shown commitment and support by initially funding AFA, we as an organisation need to seek further, ongoing funding – or where do we go from here? We'd also like to ask the Australian Government to put pressure on State and Territory governments and bring them to the party."

Ms Carroll said: "We are thankful for some acknowledgement of what has happened to us. Now we want to work together to get action to restore our lives and help each other to move on."

Families Australia is Australia's national peak, independent, not-for-profit organisation which promotes the interests of families. CEO Brian Babington said, "Families Australia is proud to be supporting AFA by auspicing funding, providing secretariat support and delivering on agreed projects. We admire the strength and resilience of the survivors and respect their views on their own situations and needs. AFA is run by Forgotten Australians themselves, with advice and support from the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and a range of Community Organisations."

For further information, go to [www.familiesaustralia.org.au](http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au) or contact Families Australia on 02 6273 4885 or email: [admin@familiesaustralia.org.au](mailto:admin@familiesaustralia.org.au)