

1 July 2020

Welcoming Open Place to Relationships Australia Victoria

Today, Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) officially commenced as the new provider of Open Place. Open Place has been operating since 2010 and provides assistance and support to people who grew up in Victorian orphanages and homes during the last century, also known as Pre-1990 Care Leavers, or Forgotten Australians. RAV was selected by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services as the provider of Open Place following a competitive tender process. Berry Street was the previous provider.

RAV Chief Executive Officer, Dr Andrew Bickerdike said that RAV was well-placed to support Open Place to continue to deliver important services to clients. RAV is an existing provider of counselling for Pre-1990 Care Leavers/Forgotten Australians, and an organisation that delivers specialised therapeutic programs including a Forced Adoption Support Service and Redress Support Services.

“We’re honoured to have been selected to deliver Open Places services,” Dr Bickerdike said. “We recognise that the impacts of childhood trauma are lifelong, and we’re committed to ensuring that Open Place services remain accessible, safe and timely for clients.”

“On behalf of all RAV staff, I warmly welcome staff who will be delivering Open Place services, as well as clients, to our organisation,” said Dr Bickerdike. “We look forward to working together to ensure that Pre-1990 Care Leavers/Forgotten Australians are supported both now and in the future.”

Senior Manager Open Place, Michelle McDonald, said Open Place staff were pleased to be joining RAV and were focused on ongoing delivery of high-quality services that made a difference to clients’ lives.

“Open Place, its staff and Pre-1990 Care Leavers/Forgotten Australians are looking forward to a long and productive partnership with RAV,” Ms McDonald said. “With RAV’s support, and with feedback from clients and stakeholders, we will deliver our suite of services and pursue opportunities for ongoing quality improvements.”

Open Place will continue to operate from existing premises in Richmond and, once COVID-19 circumstances permit, through an outreach service to regional and rural Victorians. For more information and to use Open Place services, call 1800 779 379 (toll free) or visit <https://openplace.org.au/>.

On Monday 6 July, a short video will be released on the RAV and Open Place websites to mark the commencement of Open Place at RAV and recognise the 10 years of service delivery. The video will feature Dr Bickerdike, Ms McDonald, RAV’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officer, Ash Dargan, and Open Place Community Education Coordinator and Forgotten Australian, Caroline Carroll.

END OF RELEASE

The Open Place suite of services is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Media Contact: Anna Clarke, Senior Manager Communications and Marketing. Ph: 0421 510 242