

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon. Linda Burney MP
Minister for the State Plan
Minister for Community Services



Wednesday, 9 March, 2011

BURNEY LAUNCHES NSW FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIANS SERVICE

Minister for Community Services Linda Burney today opened a statewide Forgotten Australians service to assist those people who were placed in institutions, Children's Homes and orphanages up to the 1990s.

Ms Burney said Relationships Australia NSW will operate the Wattle Place NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians with \$834,000 annual funding provided by the NSW Government.

"What the Forgotten Australians suffered has impacted their lives and has meant many care leavers have experienced difficulties with trust, relationships and functioning in society.

"Wattle Place, located in Harris Park and close to transport links, will support the process of healing, sensitively considering their fears, needs and concerns.

"The service will also assist individuals in practical ways through improving literacy and numeracy skills and helping care leavers to access their entitlements in health, housing and counselling.

"It will also provide a range of other support and assistance including like access to records, support for family reunions, social activities and events and newsletters," said Ms Burney.

Anne Hollonds, CEO of Relationships Australia NSW, said, "Relationships Australia is honoured to be managing the NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians, known as Wattle Place. The launch of Wattle Place today is a long awaited move to improve the health and wellbeing of the many people who grew up in institutional care.

"The Support Service will provide specialist caseworkers and counsellors to help Forgotten Australians to cope with the difficult legacy of their childhood experiences and provide support to improve their lives and those of their families.

"Relationships Australia has been helping Australians to build better relationships for more than 62 years."

The service will be available to anyone who grew up in institutional care in NSW, regardless of where they now live in Australia. It will provide outreach to NSW regional areas. In each area, Relationships Australia will work in partnership with existing advocacy and support networks.

To contact Wattle Place NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians:

Freecall 1800 663 844 or Phone 02 8837 7000; or email wattleplace@ransw.org.au

Media contact: Phyllis Sakinofsky 9228 4455 / 0406 164 034