



Setting the Record Straight
for the Rights of the Child

2017

Records and Rights of the Child: Report of Focus Discussions

Dr Antonina Lewis

The University of Melbourne

eScholarship Research Centre

*Because one of the largest conflicts you have ... is your memory.
Because what actually happens, and what is recorded, and what you remember
– is like a little triangle you just keep bouncing around in.*

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INTRODUCTION

A.

Study Background and Purpose

The eScholarship Research Centre (ESRC) is a research centre located at the University of Melbourne dedicated to advancing archival science, digital humanities, and public knowledge for social good.

The ERSC, with the support of the University, has conducted a series of focus discussions on the topic *Records and rights of the child*. Our project builds on existing research activity at the ESRC into the impact of accessing archival material on later life experiences of people who have childhood experience living in out of home 'care'. The project team brings knowledge from the *Who Am I?* and *Find & Connect web resource* projects, and a research method informed by a commitment to working together with communities to help achieve positive change.

The purpose of this study is to obtain the perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of several key groups:

- People directly affected by policy and practice relating to records of out of home care or custody in childhood
- Representatives of government and non-government bodies responsible for making, regulating, enforcing, or altering those recordkeeping frameworks
- Creators and custodians of records of relevance to Care Leavers
- Frontline support workers who assist Care Leavers with discovery and access to records.

The ESRC would like to better understand challenges faced by these participant groups in relation to existing recordkeeping practice, and explore what they consider to be opportunities for change. The research will contribute to the forthcoming National Summit *Setting the Record Straight: for the rights of the child*.

Additional information about the National Summit and its framing Initiative can be found online at: <http://rights-records.it.monash.edu/>.

The research team would like to thank all of the individuals who participated in the focus groups.

B.

Methodology

Three focus groups were conducted in different locations on September 5, 12 and 14, 2016. Respectively, these discussions were held at: Canberra Museum and Gallery (ACT); the Brisbane Powerhouse (QLD); and History House, Sydney (NSW).

The discussions ranged between three to four hours and were conducted in closed rooms, with participants free to come and go at any point during the session. Audio taping equipment was employed (with the consent of participants), and each of the sessions has been transcribed. A copy of the recording Consent Form / Conditions of Use is attached as an Appendix to this report.

The focus groups were guided to explore several key issues including:

- Inclusion on the record
- Privacy and possession
- Making change happen

Representatives from the ESRC were present at each session. Louisa Coppel of The Big Picture consulting moderated the focus groups and was integral to the process.

C.

Statement of Limitations

In consideration of the limited number of discussion participants, this research must be considered in a qualitative frame of reference. Focus groups seek to develop insight and direction, rather than formulate quantitatively precise measures.

The value of focus groups is in their ability to provide observers with unfiltered comments from a target population, enabling decision-makers to gain insight into the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the identified group. The data presented should not be extrapolated as being the same as might emerge from a wider universe of similar respondents.

We remind readers that this report is intended to clarify some of the known challenges with regard to recordkeeping policy and practice for childhood records, and suggest potential avenues for positive change. It does not propose to hold solutions to the many complex and contested issues at stake for care leavers and others accessing records about their childhoods.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section of the report summarizes high level findings of the three focus groups in Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney. A more detailed breakdown, including anonymised verbatims from participants, is captured in Section III – Key Findings.

Acknowledging that the rights of children have far greater social, legal and political currency now than in the past, participants across all three focus groups identify persistent shortfalls in relation to rights in records. The rights of children – and the adults they become – to exercise active agency in the determination and record of decisions is integral to their identity and wellbeing. Our research indicates these rights continue to be compromised, with each focus group articulating the need for systemic change to address longstanding failures and contradictions in both the application of policy and the interpretation of guiding legislation.

Shortfalls most commonly expressed by respondents exist in relation to issues of: informed consent; inclusive participation; (mis)representation of identity; information portability; and post-care disclosure of records. Much frustration is caused by divergent access regimes across differing jurisdictions and cohorts, and the inflexibility of FOI processes is identified as the cause of some individuals abandoning attempts to gain access to their records, due to the mental and emotional toll being exacted. Similarly, current redaction practices are overwhelmingly disparaged as being inconsistent, opaque, and ultimately detrimental; further eroding any trust care leavers may have in government or past care providers. A shared advocacy agenda with national cooperation across State and Federal governments is seen as both crucial and lacking.

Participants speak of the need for a cohesive change agenda with national leadership to drive it, suggesting high profile sponsors of transformational change are required. While agreeing that positive (if incremental) action is taking place to address co-creation and simplified access to records, the examples shared by respondents indicate this is often enacted on a discretionary basis, outside of organisational policy. Or, it is occurring on a localised project basis, with little opportunity for cross-jurisdictional collaboration or ongoing program funding to embed and evaluate value longer term.

One area where sustained change is seen to be occurring is in the training of government case workers. All groups drew attention to the shift toward child-centred practice as a focus in policy frameworks, and to the benefits of programs that directly engage care leavers and support services to share their experiences as part of training models for those working with children. However, without recordkeeping systems that keep pace with and support changing practice, the potential for this enhanced learning to be reflected in record cannot be fully realised.

A common theme for models of practice-led change emerging from the focus groups is the strategy of engaging and empowering young people through technology. This is seen as an area where recordkeeping systems can be improved to the benefit of both children and case workers. Enthusiasm for the possibilities of new digital technologies is tempered by notes of caution with regard to the complexities of developing participatory systems in and for CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) environments; for use in remote locations lacking network infrastructure; or simply in ways that appeal to young people while also adequately protecting and respecting their

immediate and future privacy needs. A number of participants flag the need for such endeavours to be undertaken in a sustainable manner, expressing concern that prototype systems to date are rarely developed with longevity or interoperability as a part of their technical specification.

The observations of respondents with recent experience living in care, and/or working with young people in care or detention, echo many of the same frustrations as are evidenced in the testimony of adult care leavers to Senate Inquiries and numerous other consultations (including this one). While positive examples are also provided, data collected in this research suggests that children who are placed into protection or detention in Australia today continue to experience pervasive failures in the duty of care in relation to how records about them are being collated, managed, consulted and released.

An identified service gap also exists in the provision of support for adult care leavers who are over 25 years of age (and so outside the standard post-care support network), but who are not eligible for support services offered to Stolen Generations or Forgotten Australians. These people are at risk of “falling through the gaps” and not having adequate support for locating, requesting and receiving their childhood records.

Systemic change to recordkeeping and archival practice is required if child-centred practice is to more fully extend into this domain, and if the keepers of records about children are to avoid becoming complicit in the repetition of similar patterns of compound and intergenerational trauma as have occurred in Stolen Generations, Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and Forced Adoption communities. We are seeing disturbingly familiar trends in relation to records of children in immigration or juvenile justice detention, as well as those young people currently, or recently, in the out-of-home care system. This study suggests an opportunity exists for the ARK (archives and recordkeeping) community to work together with others in community, government and allied sectors (law, technology, research, education) toward common principles for change; positioning the rights of children as vital to the integrity of their records. To this end, we propose a first iteration of five Principles for Inclusive Recordkeeping, formulated using the insights of our focus group participants.

KEY FINDINGS

A.

Participants

Respondents nominate key motivations for their participation in the focus discussions as: wanting to contribute to record making and disclosure processes becoming more inclusive and less distressing; respecting multiple rights in records; and, a desire to see the records themselves become more meaningful to persons seeking information about their childhood.

For me, being here today is trying to make things a little bit easier for people that might want to access their information in the future, because it was very difficult for me.

– CREATE young consultant, Canberra.

What's really interesting to me is how we can change the systems to make contemporary recordkeeping responsive to the requirements of people. So it's an access issue, it's a rights issue, but the institutions are fundamentally geared to institutions still, so I'm really interested in playing around with that notion.

– Independent consultant, Sydney.

My interest is very much on the balance between access and privacy, when it comes to sensitive records, and I think that's a challenge.

– Archivist, Brisbane.

I'm really interested today in conversations about children and young people owning their records ... it's stuff we've grappled with for lots of years, record ownership and what that looks like.

– Federal government employee, Canberra.

I work in an area which is responsible for out of home care policy under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children ... we want to make sure the policies really recognise the child's right to access their records and that we're making records that are going to be useful.

– Federal government employee, Canberra.

Often in some of the research we do directly with young people, they bring up the issue of wanting to access the records and the impact of not being able to actually access things like their care plan, to which they're entitled, and the bureaucratic barriers...

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

In a variety of contexts, participants highlight disconnects across legislative standards, or between policy directives and their own experiential or practice-based knowledge of situations faced by children in care, or in a post-care context.

The child who's had 12, 15, 18, 30 placements is not leaving care with any of those records really. I mean I've gotta say that. Not happening.

– State government employee, Canberra.

One of the big gaps that we do have in our recording is around placement matching and decision making, because a huge amount of work does go into finding placements for kids [but] it often isn't well recorded ... it's in their Outlook system, so there's lots of emails, telephone calls ... we're not as good as we should be at recording how a placement decision was made, or a change in placement was made.

– State government employee, Sydney.

Young people we're talking to really want an honest reason why placements break down.

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

Going through the case notes, we noticed that they weren't kept ... as things were happening. They'd filled them in later. There was a lack of honesty there with what was being reported.

– Advocacy worker, Sydney.

We might go to Adoptions for that client, we might have to go to RTI [Right to Information] for that client who was fostered, we might have to go to The Sisters of Mercy for that client who was in an institution run by them. But they are all entitled to a completely different quality of information. So for our adopted clients, they can actually get quite a lot back now and they can even get the name of their putative father now. But [if] we're going through RTI ... they can't get anything. Nothing. They can't even get the name of their birth mother. That's not their information. So it's very hard, and it's very hard to also explain why...

– Support worker, Brisbane.

The need to continually humanise and contextualise recordkeeping processes and administrative practice to support the welfare of children was agreed. Concerns were expressed about how well this is monitored, especially where human services are outsourced. This was articulated as being both a moral rights issue, and also a legal or human rights issue.

These things are happening now – detention centres, juvenile justice centres ... this is not an appropriate way of dealing with children.

– Independent consultant, Sydney.

I have grave concerns about these issues ... with the State outsourcing its responsibilities of looking after children to organisations that used to be religious organisations that have now morphed into multi million, billion dollar corporations with a façade of having a church in front of them ... I find that very troubling, because they have control, private organisations have control over the aspects of that person's life.

– Advocacy worker, Sydney.

I sometimes think back, how was my recording, what did I do with that, what was that like? And I know what the pressures looked like in organisations. If you didn't document it, it didn't happen, and you've got to ... and it's so bureaucratically structured and so fraught, and so difficult, and so scrutinised, that some of that humanity can then be stripped out of it.

– State government employee, Canberra.

There has been quite an emphasis around the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and us getting better at ensuring that kids understand their rights and that we respect those rights.

– State government employee, Sydney.

B.

The whole record, the whole person

Participants were clear that it is crucial for children's records to include information of individual significance (as well as administrative use), to ensure later life access not only to identity documents, but also to histories of personal development.

Administrative records – and – what's the most important thing for the child or young person: these concepts need to be brought together. If you've got fifteen files and someone's reading and saying "well, this is not helpful for me," then what was the point?

– Federal government employee, Canberra.

People see it as their records and it's telling their story, [but] when those records were created they weren't creating a record for the subject of the record, they were creating the record for the administrative [purpose]... And that's what makes it so heartless and disappointing.

– Archivist, Brisbane.

They're really thinking [now] about how they're contributing to someone's identity and all their training materials and guidelines around writing stories or creating records is that they're creating identity for people, that they're holding stories and capturing lives. No, I don't think they always get it right, but I think their intention is very much is on the right track.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

The danger is to say the life story book is on the file, tick, when it's actually...it's the engagement in making it, keeping it, adding to it, talking about it, telling the stories, and it's that storytelling as much as the documentation that needs to be supported...

– Researcher, Canberra.

Opinion was less unified about how to best achieve this, with attitudes divided between those – in the majority – who advocated for two distinct sets of records to be kept (an administrative record for organisational purposes, and a personal record set for self-identity); and those supportive of retaining the concept of the holistic record, albeit better augmented with personal, participatory, and post-care material – and better able to be segmented as required.

I'd also like elements of the file, especially digital files to be made really clear so ... the personal history can be quickly, digitally, easily separated.

– NGO worker (record holding organisation), Sydney.

Records are both for the child and about the child and I don't think we can mush those two necessarily.

– Independent consultant, Sydney.

This is life ... understanding recordkeeping is a skill that you need for life.

– Researcher, Canberra.

Most recognise that records of childhood are not static; and the process of seeking information may be contributing more to the record.

When we talk about NGOs ... we're supporting people to access records [and] becoming default record holders because they ask us to hang onto a copy... There's a lot of issues there.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

Some of the requests that we took in the early 1990s are ... records in their own right, because those clients have now passed on, but they wrote their little stories back then, which their kids might not know about.

– State government employee, Brisbane.

Redaction of material on files before release to the subjects of those files was almost unanimously disparaged. All three groups indicated that people are rarely surprised by what's in their records – rather, they are more likely to be upset by what's missing or redacted.

I wish that there were no redactions on the files. We can deal with the shittiness.

– Care leaver and advocacy worker, Sydney.

Consistently, without exception, every young person we talk to really wants to know what happened, who their parents were, and they do get very frustrated and anxious around not knowing their past and also having parts of their records blanked out, they can't get the information. That's the trauma, that's a source of anxiety for young people: they might not want to make the same mistakes as their parents, but they haven't a point of reference.

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

In my own situation ... things have been redacted and I had them already ... so it gets to be a bit absurd. Or my siblings have the information, and I can't get it. It just ... it's kind of a frustration.

– Adoptee and advocacy worker, Brisbane.

I can think of a case where I've got a father and son. The father became the client over ten years ago. We have on file when he went searching for his son, the same records where a lot more was released. We found the son, the son became a client very recently; we applied for those records on his behalf and everything seemed blanked out. So those records are actually about him too but it's quite phenomenal how much has been taken out.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

The redaction thing is just a major, major thorn in the side to a lot of people.

– NGO worker (record holding organisation), Sydney.

We've taken the view that we're not going to redact a word ... we're possibly in breach of something or other, but we've just seen too much pain and we're not going to do it to people. And the conversation today has confirmed me in that view. I'm going to continue to do that.

– NGO worker (record holding organisation), Sydney.

C.

Silos and stumbling blocks

The appropriateness of FOI/RTI as the mechanism for individuals requesting records about their childhood and identity is heavily questioned.

Often we will say when we begin an FOI; depending on who the applicant is, because we don't know when we get the application, we don't know what the story is until we start unpacking it, reading the files: and we often go "This should not be happening through an FOI process".

– State government employee, Canberra.

I'm tired of fighting Western Australia where if you request your state ward file you have to stipulate what you want. How do care leavers know what they want when they don't know what's on the file?

– Care leaver and advocacy worker, Sydney.

It would be nice to think that somewhere in the future it's a different way [other than FOI] that people can access their information that's held by government, in particular in this arena ... when people have been in care.

– State government employee, Canberra.

Lack of resourcing is a recurring theme. Some participants note the struggle to maintain service levels in the face of budget cuts and "efficiency dividends"; others highlight the threat to embedding and maintaining practice-led improvements where funding support is only made available on short-term project basis.

I think a lot of us are still not resourced enough ... I feel really greedy saying that, because we do have a big unit, but it's just not enough. We get over a thousand requests a year and some of them take months to do ... We have clients at the moment; about 10% of our clients would wait more than four years to get records.

– State government employee, Brisbane.

From an Information and Privacy Commission perspective, [the magic wand would be] resourcing for government agencies to be able to proactively release records ... when a child leaves the school, they get their record, or when they leave care that they get their record; or it could be going back to look at the historical records and looking at how they might be digitally made available so they can be proactively given to people rather than people having to battle a system to request and to access them that way.

– State government employee, Sydney.

Information sharing is hampered by lack of interoperability between systems, especially across State and Territory borders.

-Do the client information systems talk to each other in each state?

-No.

- Exchange between session facilitator and State government worker, Sydney.

There is a real danger of policy having negative impacts – whereby intended protections or improvements lead to “worse” outcomes in practice.

-The Hughes decision [QLD, 2012; Hughes and Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services]...

-That affected everything after that. They’ve really batted down.

-But that’s a very interesting reflection because Queensland was quite liberal and went through a period of giving a lot of access to individuals... then they did redress and they kind of closed the doors... it was either an administrative arrangement and so they were enabled to do it, they are still able to do it [or] something changed and they’ve stopped.

– Exchange between Independent consultant and Support worker, Sydney.

We have no discretion any more. At one point we had discretion. We have no discretion – under RTI [Right to Information legislation], this is what I’m talking about; not generally. No discretion.

– State government employee, Brisbane.

*We have to work resourcefully **around** things and find public information in many cases, so there’s a whole question around, this is just stuff I’ve found from my computer anywhere in the world that’s available, but there’s these things that are there to protect, like the Child Safety legislation that is there for confidentiality, which actually does the opposite of providing support and information.*

– Support worker, Brisbane.

Tensions exist between the wishes of those wanting to close (or destroy) their records and the desire to safeguard intergenerational rights in records.

I’ve spoken with grandparents who’ve been through the system themselves and they talk about their experience going through children’s homes, so you have that ... multi-generational as well.

– State government employee, Canberra.

You can’t understand your story without understanding the role of other people in it...

– State government employee, Brisbane.

D.

Positive practice and pathways for change

Inclusion of care leavers and support workers in the co-design and/or delivery of training.

Create Foundation works in partnership [with the government] to train case workers ... we have a session where we bring in young person with care experience ... and they can speak to what makes a good case worker and I think it's really encouraging for [having] the factors in place to make the record a lot more child friendly.

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

One of the things that brings me great joy in my work is... the opportunity to facilitate training for new people in the Department of Child Safety here in Queensland, which gives me an opportunity to talk to them about records and how they can start to make an impact before it's too late for young people. I guess that's my passion and joy, apart from just my work.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

Using technology to prioritise the rights of children in creating layered records of care that enable multiple voices to be present in ways that facilitate access for all parties.

The conversation is: everyone should be able to enter data. In those consultation groups it was like, so should the young person, so should the parent, so should the foster carer. So, you know, probably the birth parent isn't going to see what that worker ... you know, there's going to need to be some privacy stuff within there, but that young person should be able to access their records digitally, or have input in that way, or in a number of ways.

– State government worker, Canberra.

Apps come and go ... it's great for the immediacy, but if we want it to serve the life history, the story purposes, it needs a sustainability base; which none of the apps I've seen have even thought about.

– Independent consultant, Sydney

At times I reckon I would have used [participatory apps, if they had been available]; but then, there were also a lot of times when I didn't want to participate in anything, with anything really ... And then obviously, if there's someone who's going through something that's quite traumatic, then I think even more reason they wouldn't want to ... But ... it's good to have more tools than nothing, and provide more support.

– CREATE young consultant, Canberra.

We've got to make sure it's not just about children who are in care, it's actually any child where there's been intersection, really, with a statutory-type service ... what happened that there was someone else involved in my life at this time ... it's actually how to help an adult make sense of the memories that they've had when they were a child so they can move forward.

–State government employee, Canberra

Recognise that 'family' is a broad concept.

It's not always the biological thing that's important as the significant person.

– Advocacy worker, Brisbane.

I'd like to see more cultural consideration in policy. One example ... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of family are very different ... In Aboriginal kinship systems there are instances where what is considered by Western society as a cousin is actually more of a sibling relationship. For example, a [woman] and her female cousin may relate as sisters if their mothers were sisters.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

Supportive release of information is an area where further improvements can be made.

I was in care till I was 18, from six weeks old. My case file took me almost two years to get access to ... I didn't get any support, reading files. I was pretty much just sent them in the post; massive boxes and left to read them by myself. It was just really not nice to do... And on top of that, a lot of the information that I did want to access was considered sensitive so it was left out anyway ... the answers I wanted weren't in there anyway. So yeah, it was really disappointing.

– CREATE young consultant, Canberra.

What we've been seeing ... people come with their box. They bring it to our [art] sessions and they're really crying out for more, much more support in how they deal with these records, because for them it's very traumatic. There are so many mysteries and traumas around their childhood that get, in a way, re-opened; Pandora's box, literally. I'm not sure what exists, but they seem to feel that they're alone in this process.

– Arts worker and researcher, Sydney.

We find that when we send the big files out to the recent care leavers, we often get reports back from our case workers that it's traumatic for those young people to have to contend with all of that stuff. While the case workers are very well meaning in putting nice stuff on the file, how do you find the nice stuff in an 80 volume file about you?

– State government employee, Sydney.

Hurdles to accessing records is exacerbating trauma for already vulnerable people, whereby the obstacles to accessing information about their own lives heightens existing feelings of fear, mistrust, uncertainty, intimidation, guilt and angst.

Standardise the legislation under which all the records are held and kept, standardise access requirements, and provide free and full access.

– Support worker, Sydney.

CONCLUSION: FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSIVE RECORDKEEPING

- **Inclusive recordkeeping requires inclusive language and design**
- **Inclusive recordkeeping requires clarity around the terms of participation**
- **Inclusive recordkeeping means having a right of reply**
- **Inclusive recordkeeping allows people agency over their information**
- **Inclusive recordkeeping recognises multiple rights in records**

- **Inclusive recordkeeping requires inclusive language and design.**

Records can't be inclusive if meaning is not able to be drawn from the file.

– Support worker, Brisbane.

- **Inclusive recordkeeping requires clarity around the terms of participation.**

Clarity in all structures and processes ... making it clear what is going on the record and what is not is very important.

– Advocacy worker, Brisbane.

The young people that we talk to, they're usually really horrified that the Department can continue to keep files about them ... they are really worried others will read about them afterwards and they don't want it to be used like a case study.

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

- **Inclusive recordkeeping means having a right of reply.**

One of the things that comes up ... is that children are consulted and they give their opinions and then something different happens and they never know why.

– CREATE employee, Canberra.

In terms of contemporaneous records, if [young people who are currently in care] are not participating in the creation of their records, with multiple agencies involved in child protection now, if information is put on their record that perhaps is a mistake, or misunderstood information, and if the young person can't correct it, or express their own meaning ... the decision makers in their life can make decisions based on that [false] information ... so it's not just a future issue, of looking back.

– State government employee, Canberra.

- **Inclusive recordkeeping allows people agency over their information.**

We've actually had young people make suggestions about how they could get better control of their records and we know some young people that are developing their own app working with a team at FACS [Family and Community Services] to inform the shift ... it's portable and they're not relying on the Department to get records ... they own that account. It carries the kids' records and the case workers have input into it. They contribute to that. When they turn 18, they know where their birth certificates are, they know the records on their account – so I guess there's a sort of solution coming from young people in care today about how to resolve the issue of placement instabilities and the discontinuity of records.

– CREATE employee, Sydney.

Some of the women working with us haven't opened the files. They say ... part of it is just having the power to have them.

– Arts worker and researcher, Sydney.

- **Inclusive recordkeeping recognises multiple rights in records.**

The training that I used to deliver to CYPS [Child and Youth Protection Services] staff...my first thing was: who are you writing this for? The child is the primary, and then there's all these other people. Of course the government has that need for accountability; in terms of planning, there's a whole lot of stakeholders; but the main audience, thinking about who's going to read that in the future, could be that child.

– State government employee, Canberra.

It's about you, but it's also about a whole bunch of other people, a string of people that we've talked about – they've all got a stake in it, in some way, and so at some point, some of them are going to want to get access the records as well...

– NGO worker (record holding organisation), Sydney.

I think it's joint ownership. At the end of the day. Because it's an interaction between the Department or the organisation and the child ... I think both entities have rights, yeah, absolutely, without doubt. It's a two way street.

– Care leaver, Canberra.

APPENDIX 1: FLYER



Focus Discussion: Records and rights of the child

The eScholarship Research Centre at the University of Melbourne is staging a half-day of creative thinking and knowledge exchange: *Records and rights of the child*.

The event is an opportunity for public conversation exploring new possibilities for old problems; and sharing strategies to drive informed policy change. The discussion will bring together people directly affected by policy and practice relating to the records of out-of-home care or custody in childhood alongside representatives of the government and non-government bodies responsible for making, regulating, or altering those frameworks.

Three focus discussions, facilitated by Louisa Coppel of The Big Picture, will be held in Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney in September 2016. They form the core of a research and engagement project which has been fully funded by the University of Melbourne. Discussions will be centred around four broad topic areas:

- Inclusion on the Record
- Privacy and Possession
- Implications of Outsourcing
- Making Change Happen

Our project builds on existing research activity at the University's eScholarship Research Centre and the experience of a project team coming from the *Who Am I?* and *Find & Connect Web Resource* projects. We are committed to working together with communities disadvantaged by policy failures and shortfalls in Australian records/archives practices to help achieve lasting change.

When: Monday 12 September 2016, 10.30am to 2.30pm

Venue: Graffiti Room, Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington St, New Farm



For more information, contact Dr Antonina Lewis: antonina.lewis@unimelb.edu.au, 03 9035 3883.

Conditions of use for session recordings

Discussion sessions will be recorded (audio only) and transcripts of these recordings created.

Participants will not be name-identified on transcripts; initials will be used instead.

Where applicable, transcripts will identify participants as representing members of the Care Leaver community, according to the terminology preferred by the participant.

Transcripts may identify participants by their position and/or place of employment.

The original source recordings, transcripts, consent forms and these conditions of use will be held by the eScholarship Research centre (ESRC) in a secure location, for as long as the Centre is in existence, in accordance with the relevant retention and disposal schedule (under jurisdiction of the University of Melbourne).

Direct quotes from transcript that are reproduced in reports or published materials produced by the ESRC will be de-identified as standard practice, and no quotation will be publicly ascribed to a participant unless specific permission has been given by that person to do so.

The primary use of any material contained in the recordings and transcripts will be to inform or illustrate reports and other publications produced by the ESRC for the *Records and rights of the child* project, funded under the Melbourne Engagement Grant Scheme. Transcripts may also be referenced internally for outputs of the Find and Connect project, or for other related projects in which the ESRC is a partner. In all such cases, these conditions of use will continue to apply.

Copies of transcript will be provided on request and without cost to any person who was a participant in the session for which transcript is requested.

By accepting a copy of a session transcript, recipients acknowledge they will exercise due care and respect for the privacy and intellectual rights of other session participants.

Consent Form

eScholarship Research Centre



Records and rights of the child – focus discussions

Primary contact: Antonina Lewis

Additional contacts: Cate O'Neill, Rachel Tropea

Name of Participant: _____

1. I consent to participate in this group focus discussion and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the discussion at any time without explanation or prejudice.
3. I understand that the purpose of the discussion is to identify problems and possibilities relating to access and inclusion for the subjects of childhood records: to share experience of the way things are now and to speculate constructively on how they might be made different in the future.
4. I will be asked to use case studies, hypothetical scenarios, and respectful discussion to identify where access and inclusion are inhibited by existing policy models, and to help articulate alternatives that can provide better outcomes for children and adults.
5. I understand that my participation will be audio-taped.
6. I understand that the data from this project will be stored at the University of Melbourne in accordance with the "Conditions of use for session recordings" which have been provided to me.
7. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form, it will be retained with the project data.

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Date of report: 27 January 2017.