

# Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child

**National Summit 8-9 May 2017 Report**

[rights-record.it.monash.edu](http://rights-record.it.monash.edu) #RightsRecords



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CHILD MIGRANTS TRUST



**Connecting Home**  
a service for the Stolen Generations



**Federation**  
UNIVERSITY • AUSTRALIA



The Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child Initiative has been established in partnership with Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN), the Child Migrants Trust, Connecting Home, CREATE Foundation, Federation University's Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History (CRAH), Monash University's Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics (COSI) and the University of Melbourne's eScholarship Research Centre (ESRC).

# Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Barbara Reed, Viviane Hessami and Joanne Evans on behalf of the Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child Initiative

## SUMMIT RECORDING

### Photography

Marlène Habib at Unbound Photography

### Videography

Strong Productions

### Graphic recording

Matthew Magain at Sketch Videos

### Note Takers

Viviane Hessami, Belinda Battley, Catherine Nicholls, David McGinniss, Katherine Jarvie, Sandra Ennor.

A big thank you to all the participants who kept those not able to make it to the Summit informed by tweeting using **#RightsRecords**



Australian  
Society of  
Archivists

Graphic recording made possible with support from the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA).

## SUMMIT PLANNING GROUP

**Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics, Monash Faculty of IT:** Joanne Evans, Sue McKemmish, Judith Ellis, Viviane Hessami, Nina Lewis

**Child Migrant Trust:** Ian Thwaites

**CLAN:** Frank Golding

**CREATE Foundation:** Lara Gerrand

**Connecting Home:** Debbie Kerr, Lisa Zammit

**Elder in Residence, Monash University:** Diane Singh

**eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne:** Nicola Laurent, Rachel Tropea, Kirsten Wright

**Federation University Australia:** Jacqueline Wilson

**Indigenous Services, State Library NSW:** Kirsten Thorpe

**Monash Indigenous Studies Centre:** Shannon Faulkhead

**Recordkeeping Innovation:** Barbara Reed

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## DESIGN & PRODUCTION

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# Summit Report

## PURPOSE

This report seeks to:

- Remind those who attended the Summit of the key points raised in presentations and addresses;
- Inform those who are interested but unable to attend the Summit of the diversity and depth of the discussions;
- Support the Strategic Plan drafted post-Summit by identifying the context of many of the action points raised; and
- Engage attendees, their organisations and other interested parties in becoming part of the collaborative ongoing work to transform recordkeeping for those who are in, or who have experienced, out-of-home care.

## REPORT DEVELOPMENT

This report is selective and cannot represent the diversity of voices and views reflected by participants at the Summit. In the spirit of open engagement with diverse views the organisers of the Summit determined that discussion was enhanced by having no audio or video recording of the proceedings. Rather a team of note-takers were at work capturing key points from each session, with live visual notetaking from Matthew Magain, a talented sketch artist. These have provided the base for this report. Short videos featuring interviews with a variety of contributors to the program and filming at the event also illustrate and add richness to this text report.



## ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Recordkeeping and archiving systems are failing to meet the lifelong identity, memory and accountability needs of children who get caught up in child welfare and protection systems. Over many years, recordkeeping issues have been identified as critical to individual healing, yet while there have been some improvements in recordkeeping, fundamental challenges remain.

The following points provide a very condensed picture of what we know:

- When those separated from family to grow up in orphanages, Children's Homes and more recent forms of statutory care (kinship, foster and residential care) have turned to records to make sense of those experiences, they have confronted multiple difficulties in locating and accessing them, and too often found them lacking and unable to answer their questions.
- A host of inquiries have repeatedly demonstrated that past and present recordkeeping and archival infrastructure puts the rights of organisations, institutions and governments ahead of those of children and their adult selves.
- Recordkeeping for those who experience out-of-home care continue to be based on the administrative and reporting needs of organisations and government agencies rather than those of the child and their adult selves.
- The Records and Recordkeeping Consultation Paper from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse joins the long line of inquiry, advocacy and research reports which describe the failings as systemic.

The immediate and lifelong needs of childhood out-of-home care cannot be addressed by incremental changes to existing recordkeeping and archiving infrastructure. These have been built for previous eras of child protection and welfare designed for a different age, different values, different principles, and a different technological paradigm. Fundamental transformations are required.

The Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child Initiative evolved from the knowledge that this fundamental transformation needed to be collaborative and evolutionary, involving multiple communities of interest and working together to imagine transformational recordkeeping and unite in our steps to achieve such transformation.

The Summit brought together representatives from a range of community, organisation, government and professional perspectives to learn, share and imagine. Importantly, the Summit is seen as the beginning of a longer term collaborative endeavour to collectively work towards transformative change.

## THE SURROUNDINGS - IMAGINED ARCHIVES EXHIBITION

Surrounding participants were the results of the Imagined Archive Project, displaying a range of art works bringing together works from different community advocacy perspectives to respond to the challenges presented by the Summit through creativity and respect. For more details, please see the write up of the Imagined Archives Exhibition by Nina Lewis at the end of this report.

## WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Summit opened with a welcomed to country by Wurrundjeri Elder Diane Kerr and Boon Wurrung Foundation CEO Gheran Steel, representatives of the traditional owners of the land on which we met. Participants respectfully acknowledged their culture, traditions and stewardship of the land, and paid respect to their elders past and present.

A Smoking Ceremony to round out day one provided a further moment to acknowledge the importance of culture and country, particularly to those denied those connections during their childhoods. It was also a chance to refresh and cleanse our spirits for day two in looking to turn what we had learned into action. These events underlined the Summit's aspirations of inclusion, collaboration and community empowerment and we thank Arweet Carolyn Briggs and Jaeden Williams from the Boon Wurrung Foundation and Wurrundjeri Elder Diane Kerr and Melissa Kerr for a moving end to the day.



# Day One

## **Community Voices & Experiences of Past & Present Practice**

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The sessions on Day One were designed to hear and learn directly from those communities who have been affected by past and present recordkeeping practices.

# Why don't we do better, when we know better?

The recordkeeping and archiving needs for childhood out-of-home care are part of one of society's wicked problems, namely how to ensure that the systems set up to protect children from abuse and neglect do not themselves cause harm.

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**Professor Muriel Bamblett AM**  
CEO of Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)



**Norman Johnston**  
President of the International Association of Former Child Migrants and their Families



**Leonie Sheedy**  
CEO of Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN)



**Associate Professor Jacqueline Wilson**  
Federation University Australia

## POINTS RAISED

From these eminent community advocates we heard:

- Individuals consistently approach records expecting answers to questions such as:
  - Who am I?
  - Who do I belong to?
  - Who belongs to me?
  - Why was I taken from my family?
- Not only are the past recordkeeping practices deficient in answering such questions, often the practices of providing records to Care Leavers illustrate a systematic lack of respect for individuals and their experience, revisiting childhood trauma onto adults.
- The problems associated with past and present recordkeeping have been highlighted in the public domain for more than 20 years through multiple, repeated recommendations on recordkeeping needs at both state and federal levels.
- Recordkeeping practices are inconsistent between jurisdictions and agencies within jurisdictions. Inconsistent practices confuse, disperse energy into one-off initiatives and frustrate action for systemic change.
- Where some positive initiatives, such as name indexing or documenting family relations, are adopted, these are applied in limited circumstances and don't carry through to current practices to address more consistent change.
- Frustration that nothing really changes. There is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed systemically.

## POINTS RAISED (CONT'D)

- This is not just an issue relating to past records, but it is key to making the agenda a proactive one, addressing children currently in out-of-home care and those who will enter care in the future.
- Having a voice in records is important, but it is only a part of providing greater agency for children.

## Got My File... But That's Not Me

This session heard from community representatives about their expectations of recordkeeping and archiving systems to support lifelong identity, memory and accountability needs. They shared their experiences of what it is like to try to find childhood records, to gain access to them, then deal with what they find or don't find in them, and of helping and supporting others in their communities to tell their own stories. They also discussed the needs of children in care today.

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



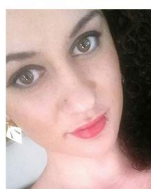
**Caroline Carroll**  
Alliance for Forgotten Australians



**Bonney Djuric**  
Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project



**Frank Golding**  
Vice President of Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN)



**Shelley Keevers**  
CREATE Young Consultant



**Uncle Michael Welsh**  
Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation

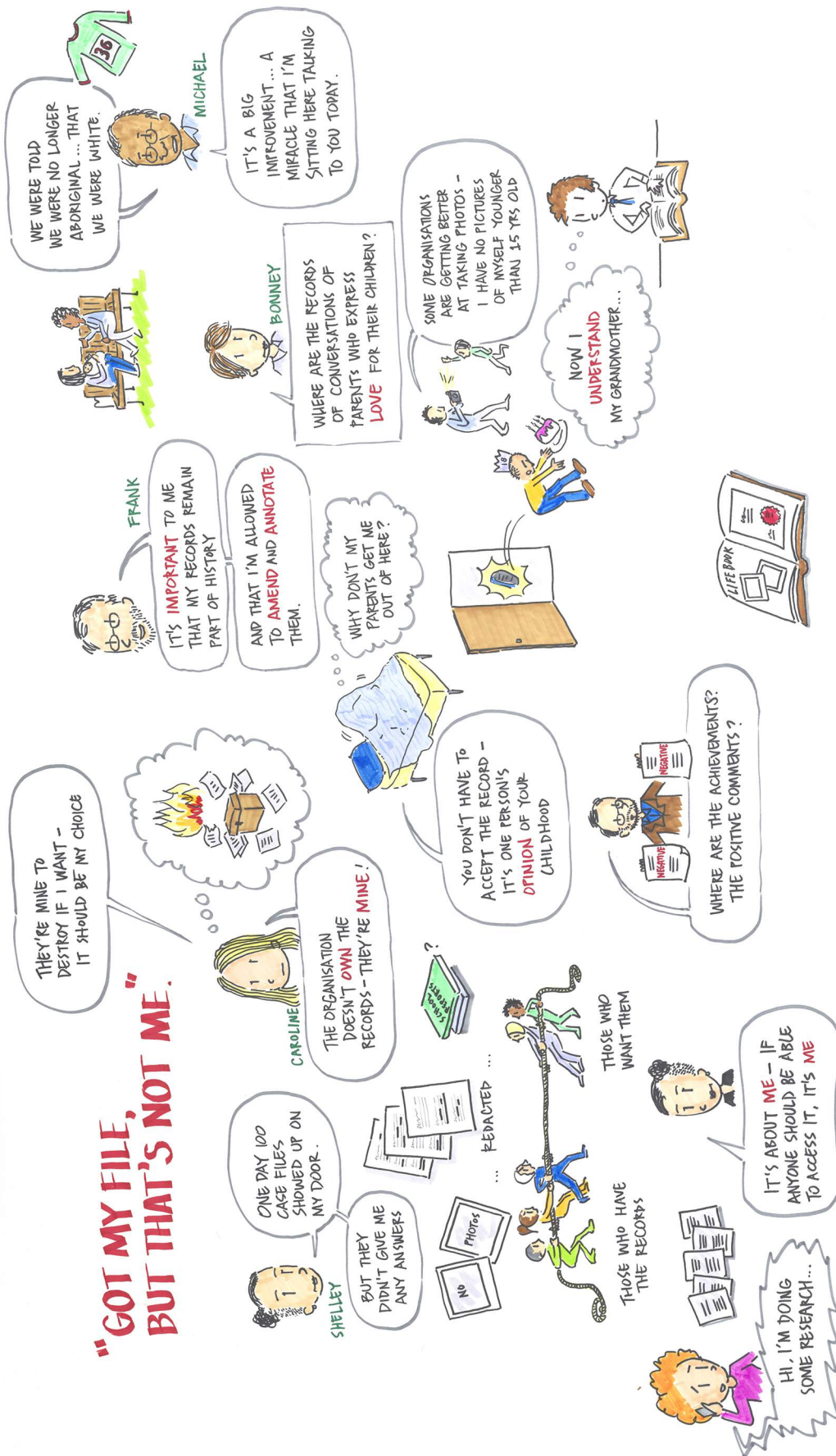
## SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What are the common identity, memory and accountability needs across Stolen Generations, Former Child Migrants, and different generations of Care Leavers? What are the particular needs for the different communities? How do they play out over lifetimes?
- Are children, young people and their adult selves able to have a say in their records and in recordkeeping and archiving processes? How are other sides of stories being told?
- Having heard about these issues in a multitude of advocacy, inquiry, and research reports, what gets in the way of addressing them?

## POINTS RAISED

From the differing perspectives of their own communities, points raised include:

- Moral ownership of records resides with the person represented in those records, along with agency to determine how they should be managed. For example, individual rights to determine destruction, or determination of access restrictions as appropriate.
- Record creating practice needs to be better informed to understand that children will come back to the records as adults.
- Defensive records practices by organisations is an ongoing problem which needs to be acknowledged. This includes conservative and risk averse interpretation of privacy rules.
- A need to appreciate that places can play an important role as sites of memory, shared experience and, hopefully, of healing.
- The need to prioritise the rights of the person in the record over those of the organisation that creates (and manages) the record.
- Problems of too much documentation are being faced by current Care Leavers, when presented with boxes of files/documents containing much redacted information. This creates a different type of problem – drowning in too much information extracted from digital systems. In these circumstances, it is difficult for Care Leavers to determine what the key documents are and to establish an understandable narrative. When would devising a narrative be appropriate? While selection might be appropriate in some circumstances, it will still be necessary to ensure that access to the entirety of the record is also available when requested.
- Stressing the importance of Life Story books and photographs.
- There is a real fear that records of childhood out-of-home care are used against Care Leavers when they become parents themselves.
- Acknowledgement that individuals may need to revisit their records at multiple times during their lives.
- Support for different types of questions being asked at different times for different life priorities is paramount.



# What Good RecordKeeping Ought To Be

We heard from those who create, manage, use and provide access to records about what they need from recordkeeping and archiving systems in order to provide quality services and support for lifelong identity, memory and accountability needs.

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**Dr Philippa White**  
Director, Tuart Place



**Cevrina Reed**  
Forgotten Australians Coming Together (FACT)  
and Tuart Place



**Barbara Reed**  
Recordkeeping Innovation



**Narelle Rivers**  
Manager, Family History Unit, AIATSIS



**Angela Sdrinis**  
Angela Sdrinis Legal



**Dr Rae Kaspiew**  
Policy Reform Transformation Office,  
Department of Health and Human Services,  
Victoria



**Professor Cathy Humphreys**  
University of Melbourne



**Michelle Tolliday**  
Performance Audit Manager, Victorian Auditor  
General's Office



**Dr Margaret Kertesz**  
University of Melbourne

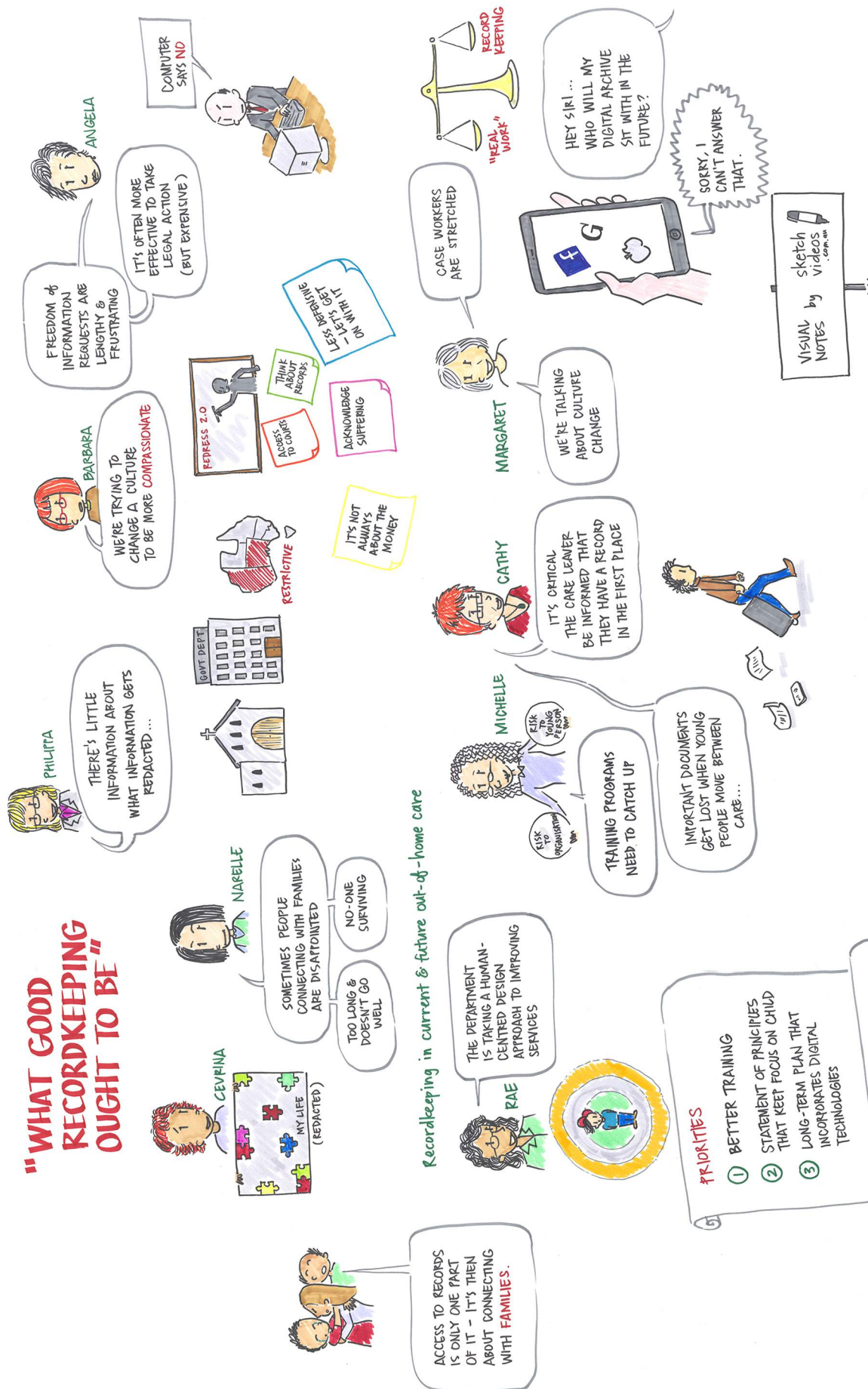
## SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What are the features of good recordkeeping and archiving for childhood out-of-home care?
- How can better access to records of past 'care' experiences be provided?
- How can better records for children and young people in out-of-home care be created?
- How to support children, young people and their adult selves having a say in their records and in recordkeeping and archiving processes?

## POINTS RAISED

- Redacted records leave those affected feeling cheated.
- Records should show when someone was in care and where there is movement in placements, where was a child placed at any time and for how long – a timeline.
- The need for a level playing field – for example, don't let those administering the redress scheme have full access if Care Leavers cannot.
- Children who have been in stable placements have better records. Those that move around multiple placements tend to be more vulnerable to fragmented recordkeeping.
- Capture the story in the record, but also the story of the record.
- A moral mandate for non-redaction of records for Care Leavers already exists in the multiple inquiries.
- Legislation might be an answer, but there are so many jurisdictions. The irony it can be quicker (but much more expensive) to get fuller access to files through issuing legal proceedings than under legislation such as Freedom of Information, where the promise of open information actually results in redacted records released in batches, privileging third parties over the child in the record.
- There is a defensive reaction by organisations to shut down access due to fears of claims for redress. This misses the point being made by many – it is often about being able to tell the story, being believed and having acknowledgement of childhood experiences.
- Training programs for social workers, care workers, children themselves on recordkeeping needs to get recordkeeping issues embedded in organisational practice.
- Organisational culture must change to support changing practice and the will to change needs to be there. Even then, goodwill is not enough to affect systemic issues. A lack of priority, a lack of awareness all impact on the capacity to make goodwill effective.
- Organisations must change the way they think about personal information – my mother's maiden name is her personal information, but it also my personal information.
- New organisational thinking must put the child at the centre. The first principle in making records should be the best interest of the child. Organisations should use the capacity of new technologies to do more, thinking differently of the now but also the digital future. Transforming how the record is being created is key.

## Accessing Records of past 'care' experiences



## Having Input In A Story That Is Going To Be Written About Me

Young care leavers devised and facilitated an exercise 'Missing Pieces' which placed participants into the role of Sam, a young Care Leaver attempting to find answers in records and exploring how it might make individuals feel if records fail to answer these questions. It was a participatory activity for delegates, designed to underline the critical interconnection of records and identity.

'Missing Pieces' extended on an earlier version of the exercise developed by Isla through her association with CREATE Foundation. Emphasising that people working with records need to understand them not simply as files, but as part of people's lives; 'Missing Pieces' asked Summit delegates to answer a set of questions based on a "case file" of evidence. However, a crucial piece of information was deliberately left out of the file. In order to complete the exercise successfully participants needed to ask questions and proactively seek additional information, rather than taking the case file they were given as the total sum of available evidence about the young person. As with earlier iterations of the exercise, the questions relating to the missing piece of information could not be answered.

### SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**Rhianon Cole**  
CREATE Young Consultant, (2008-16)



**Isla Swanston**  
CREATE Young Consultant



**Nina Lewis**  
Monash University

### SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What rights do children and young people in out-of-home care have to records?
- What rights do they have to participate in records creation, management and use?
- Are these currently supported? Could they be better supported?
- What do young people transitioning from out of care need from recordkeeping and archiving systems?

## POINTS RAISED

Reflections from young Care Leavers included:

- Life story books are great, but are often written by carers and that is not enough to engage the young person.
- Utilising new technologies – digital cameras, safe keeping places for young people's own records will assist, but with the flexibility to choose different options that suit their preferences and needs.
- Develop a Placement Kit, which may include:
  - A photo and bio of their carer, so that they know who is in that house before they go there,
  - A private journal: a safe place to talk, to draw. It is a record that they have, that can travel with them.
  - A shared journal, which can travel with them, to communicate what they like so that they don't have to keep repeating it. They can later look back at it as a memory. Young people are people. Not files. They don't like to be sitting there repeating things.
  - There should also be a Life Book to share, with their school reports, art work, etc. It can be video recorded if they prefer. Give them a camera. Save the photos on a disk or print them. This will become their photo album. Every young person has the right to have those memories. The Life Books should be made compulsory, but need to be dynamic, kept safe and be for the child or young person and their carers and case workers to use, not just for compliance.



# "HAVING INPUT IN A STORY THAT IS GOING TO BE WRITTEN ABOUT ME"

ISLA



IT'S REALLY  
IMPORTANT FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE TO  
HAVE DOCUMENTS  
THAT ANSWER THE  
QUESTION:  
**WHO AM I?**

IF YOU WANTED  
MORE OF SAM'S  
HEALTH RECORDS  
YOU COULD HAVE  
**ASKED!**

PHIANNON



**WHO IS SAM?**

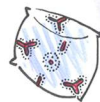


NINA



GO SUPPORT  
THE ART & CRAFT  
VENDORS UPSTAIRS!

LET THE ARTWORK  
INSPIRE YOU TO IMAGINE  
A PARTICIPATORY ART  
PROJECT AIMED AT  
DEVELOPING **ARCHIVES**  
INSPIRED BY **CREATIVITY** &  
**RESPECT!**



# Day Two

## Transforming Practice

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Day Two of the Summit sought to identify concrete mechanisms to transform practice. The day was opened by Her Honour, Justice Jennifer Coate, one of the Commissioners of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

# Calls To Action

## SESSION KEYNOTE



**Justice Jennifer Coate**  
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

Justice Coate outlined the importance of records to those appearing in public hearings and in private sessions before the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Justice Coate spoke of instances where records were not made or where records were not kept which allow organisations to deny that perpetrators were employees. The impact of poor recordkeeping practice has been evident on individual lives over and over again. The key obstacles to better recordkeeping involve inconsistent laws, technology and lack of staff training.

Justice Coate highlighted that poor records and recordkeeping put children at risk, contribute to failings in reporting and responding to abuse, and magnify impacts on victim and survivors. Good institutional/organisational recordkeeping practices, systems and cultures are essential to supporting the safety and wellbeing of children.

The Royal Commission is very aware that records relate to, and impact the life chances of, people and this emphasis is being carried forward into their work on records which will be released with the final Royal Commission's Report due in December.

After December, the work of the Royal Commission relating to records will need to be carried forward. Justice Coate left the Summit with a powerful challenge – it is up to the community to take ownership of the records issues and determine how to make change happen.

## Making Change Happen

Participants heard from those who have been part of advocating, developing and implementing strategic transformation agendas on how to bring together diverse interests and commit to working towards a shared vision.

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**Dr Brian Babington**  
CEO, Families Australia



**Amanda Shaw**  
SA Guardian for Children and Young People

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS (CONT'D)



**Lou Turner**  
Healing Foundation



**Professor Patricia Lundy**  
Convenor of Northern Ireland's Expert Panel on Redress



**Jacqui Reed**  
CEO, CREATE Foundation

## SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

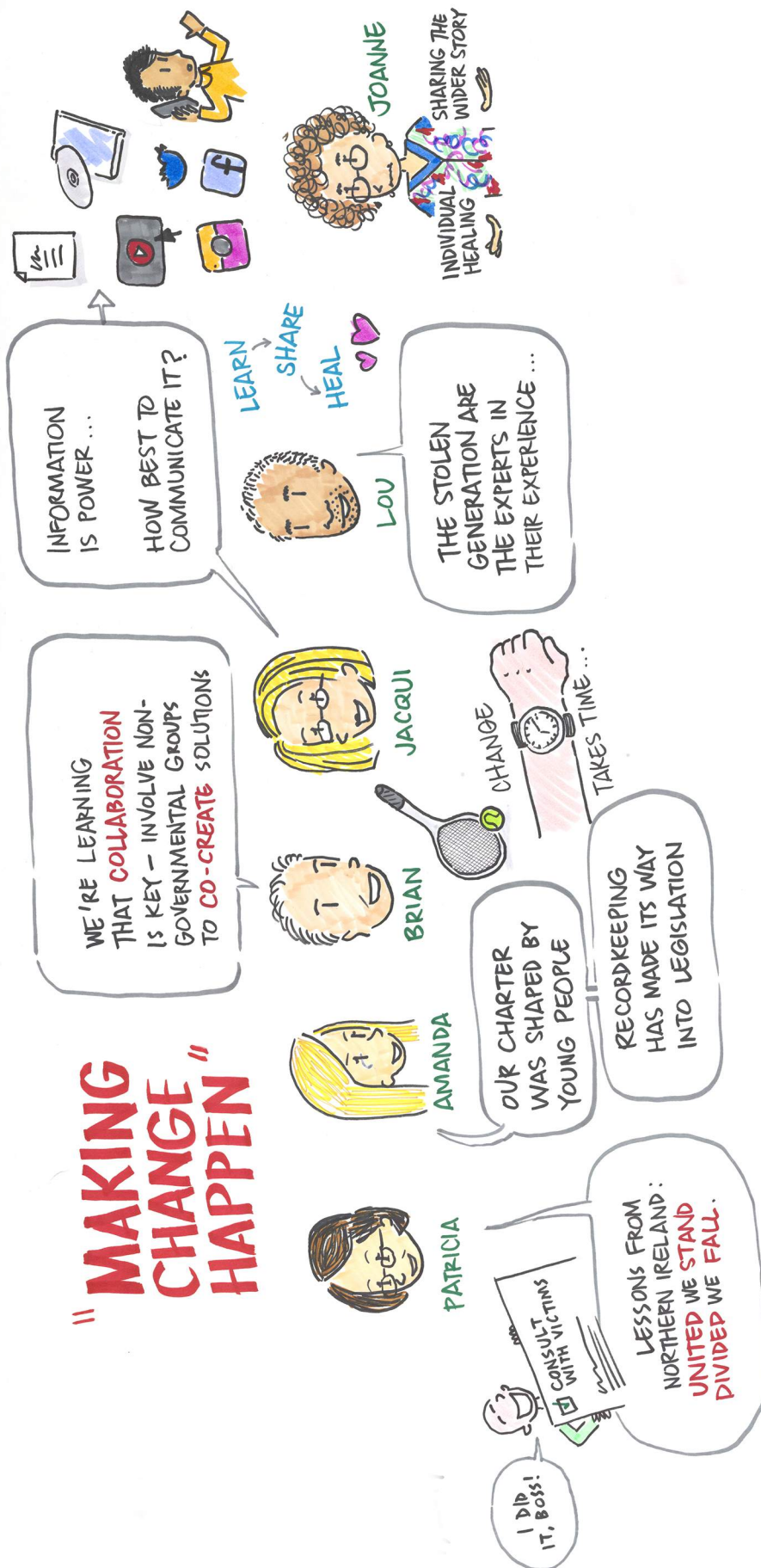
- What is involved in developing national approaches to overcome jurisdictional barriers and institutional and professional silos?
- What is the role of government? What is the role for those outside of the government? What is the role of communities? What is the role of research?
- How to empower individual and community participation?

## POINTS RAISED

Observations included:

- The need to establish a strong, inclusive and united coalition of interest, recognising a wide diversity of voices and centred on the involvement of children and young people.
- Make the case for children to be the central focus – enable them to record their own interpretations of incidents and empower them by using appropriate technology, but understand that technology is part of a solution, not all of the solution.
- Ensure that the voices of those who have been affected are strongly represented in order to learn from their experience and effect change.
- Understand the impact of trauma on individuals.
- Focus on stories – both big and small.
- Ensure a united voice with a strong champion.
- Be strategic – make sure the momentum generated by the Summit, the 20th anniversary of the Stolen Generation Report and the Royal Commission doesn't get lost.

# "MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN"



# Recordkeeping & Archiving Reimagined

Practitioners and researchers presented ideas around re-imagined recordkeeping and archiving systems to explore the potential in digital and networking technologies to move beyond automating paper practices so that multiple rights in records can be represented and enabled

## SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**Dr Shannon Faulkhead**  
Monash Country Lines Archive Project



**Dr Tiffany McComsey**  
Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation



**Kirsten Thorpe**  
Manager, Indigenous Services, State Library of NSW



**Lisa Alonso Love**  
Program Director, ChildStory, Family and Community Services, NSW



**Greg Wells**  
Program Director, ChildStory, Family and Community Services, NSW



**Jennifer McConachy**  
Berry Street



**Greg Rolan**  
Monash University

## SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

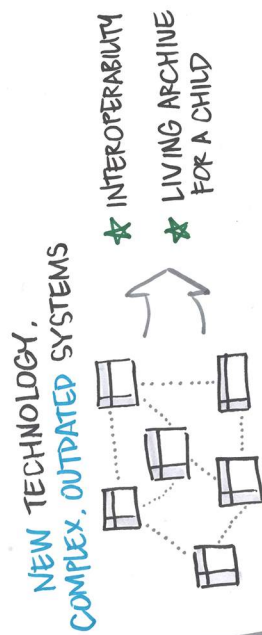
- What are the technological transformations needed to make lifelong living archives a possibility?
- What are the non-technological transformations needed to enable such a vision?
- What are some of the interoperability, sustainability, security and other challenges?

## POINTS RAISED

Presenters discussed a range of projects which are offering different approaches to recordkeeping issues. These include:

- Allowing stories, now only available in archives, to be returned to communities.
- The importance of place and twining memory and place as an approach to healing.
- Enabling people in the records to know about what has been recorded about them.
- NSW Child Story starting as a technology replacement initiative, transforming to a mechanism to record and access children's records and stories. The same records will be available for transactional management by carers, caseworkers and for access by children.
- Family Finding, an initiative of Berry Street is being developed to document relationships, both familial and care relationships which will be there for the life of a child. The software will be open source so it will be available for others to use.
- Work at research level is tackling what it takes to make transformative recordkeeping over time, including strong elements of ownership of records by the people documented in them, and thus serving their interests along with those of the transaction oriented organisations.

# "RECORDKEEPING & ARCHIVING REIMAGINED"



REMOVING A CHILD FROM A COMMUNITY HARMS:

- ★ THE CHILD
- ★ THE COMMUNITY
- ★ THE LAND

TIFFANY

WHO SHOULD MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY ARCHIVE?

SHANNON

LEARNING PLACE  
CONNECT WITH CULTURE & HERITAGE

KIRSTEN

GATHER & SUPPORT

GREG

FAMILY FINDING

JENNIFER

AN ONLINE TOOL TO HELP CONNECT A CHILD'S NETWORK

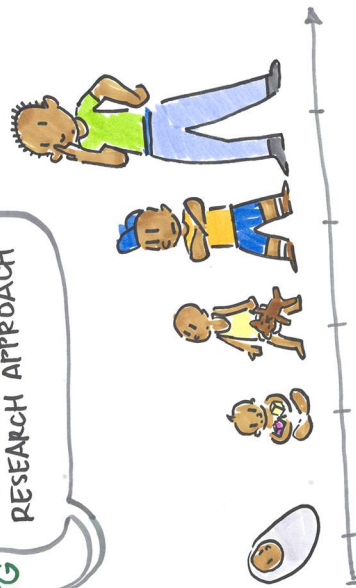
- ★ FAMILY
- ★ FRIENDS
- ★ PROFESSIONALS

REFRAMING THE PROBLEM RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON THE TECHNOLOGY

LISA

WICKED PROBLEMS REQUIRE A PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH APPROACH

GREG



VISUAL NOTES  
by sketch videos .com.au

WE NEED TO HELP CHILDREN ACCESS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR INFORMATION.

# Planning The Future

A case study provided a conversation starter for participants to develop a shared vision of transformational recordkeeping and archiving frameworks, processes and systems.

## **RECORDKEEPING AND ARCHIVING REIMAGINED - DISCUSSION STARTER**

### **Who would have rights?**

A distributed participatory archive requires a radical redesign of the systems of recordkeeping for communities and individuals.

Based on agreed participatory principles, this would include recognition of the:

- rights of multiple co-creators of the archive (individuals, families, carers, case workers, service providers, government agencies and regulators etc.) and
- rights granted to participants by the individual over the management and access to these records to each of the co-creators.

### **What would be included?**

This cumulating archive records every interaction with nominated parties. The records in the participatory archive would not only encompass the formal records of transactions, but could be oral histories, art, recollections or anything deemed an archive by the individual or community, all acknowledged and linked together with other material relevant to an individual, event, location, etc.

### **Who has control of access?**

Access to personal details of an individual is in the total control of the individual, or may be delegated to trusted third party brokers who act on time based permissions granted by the individual. It may be left in trust, have control inherited by family members or others upon the death of the individual, or be destroyed on demand after 100 years by default. It will be the authoritative source for personal information about the individual. When not in the direct control of the individual for whatever reason, and dissent or difference is encountered, this would be negotiated respectfully, and all views recorded.

### **What form would it take?**

It will not be physical, and will incorporate linked records from multiple physical records holders, creating a complex virtual networked set of records making up the record of an individual.

## SESSION FRAMING QUESTIONS

- Discussion starter - What is missing? What is unrealistic? Where are the potential barriers? What other recordkeeping futures can be imagined?
- How will defining rights based practice in care for children impact on recordkeeping?  
What would it take for Care Leavers to trust a reimagined recordkeeping system?
- What infrastructure (societal, organisational, community, individual) will be needed to sustain any such system for as long as it is needed?
- What change can be made now within existing discretionary powers? How could they be activated?
- What timeframe, what specific actions can be devised?
- What change is required in organisations, what organisations and how to enable that change?
- What professional cultural change is needed, and who would lead it?
- What public policy and legislative reforms may be needed?

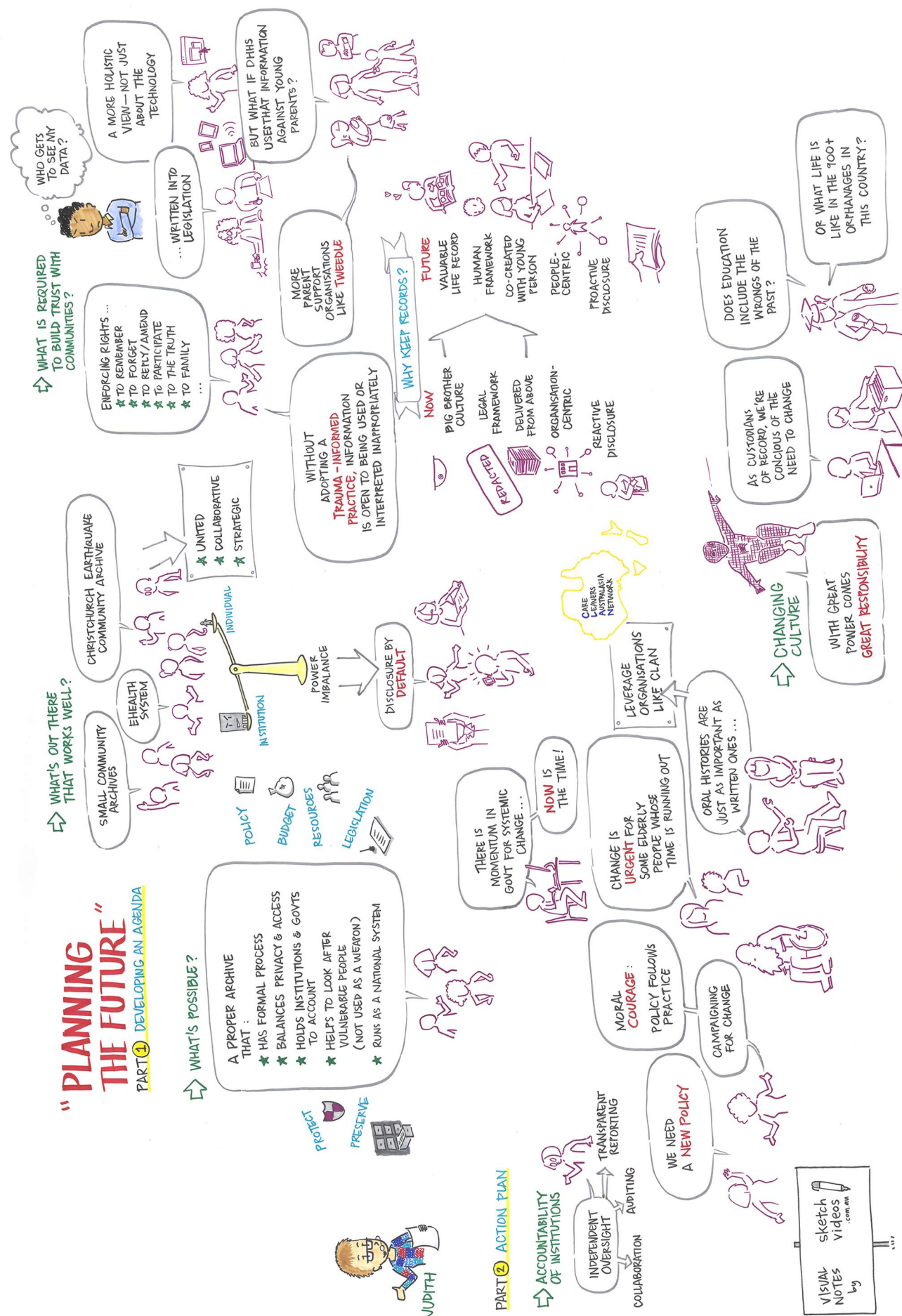
## POINTS RAISED

An open discussion with audience members sought to consolidate responses and ideas on how to affect change either in big transformative ways, or by smaller incremental improvements. Many of these ideas have been reflected in the Strategic Plan. Suggestions included:

- Thinking broadly in terms of precedents – for example the work done in eHealth using patient contributory models.
- Need to define rights in records for children, referencing the discussion draft available for comment at the Summit.
- More than a custodial model under the control of a single institution is needed.
- Frameworks need to address the clear power imbalance between individuals and organisations and start with a presumption of access.
- Case studies highlighting innovative practice show exemplars of good practice. Examples included McKillop Family Services opening all records to Care Leavers for them to select what they wish to have copied for them and UPA which has adopted a policy of no redaction for records about the individual seeking them.
- Inform children of what records are created about them, and what rights they have over those records.
- Advocate for the end to redaction for records about the individual seeking them.
- Guidance is needed for advocacy and other organisations being asked to be custodians of records of Care Leavers, and on how to approach requests for access by descendants.

## POINTS RAISED (CONT'D)

- Identify where organisations and individuals in organisations have existing discretionary powers and work with them to exercise those powers to enhance access and openness.
- Proactive disclosure of what records exist, consolidated through the existing Find and Connect Web Resource.
- Adopt Best Practice Guidelines for Access.
- Seize the opportunity that is arising with software systems renewal to advocate for different types of recordkeeping, empowering individuals to access records about themselves and designing child centric systems from the outset.
- Encourage and support organisations taking leadership in adopting changed methodologies for recordkeeping.
- Develop empathic, trauma-centred and Care Leaver-informed recordkeeping education.

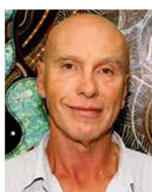


## Reflections & Close

The session rounding out the Summit stressed the importance of the diverse range of voices brought together, and that the goodwill evident at the Summit be consolidated and taken forward into collaborative networks seeking to make change happen. The importance of carrying this work forward and creating a community able to respond to and act positively as the Royal Commission's Report is released is a focussing point for this potential collaboration.

The final word in the Summit was fittingly delivered by Dr Joanna Penglase, a founder of CLAN and a pioneering advocate in this space, who stressed that the rights of children have to be paramount. She reminded us that the way a society treats its children is a key to its success.

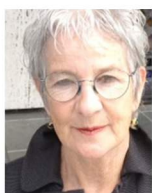
### SESSION CONTRIBUTORS



**John Dommett**  
CEO Connecting Home



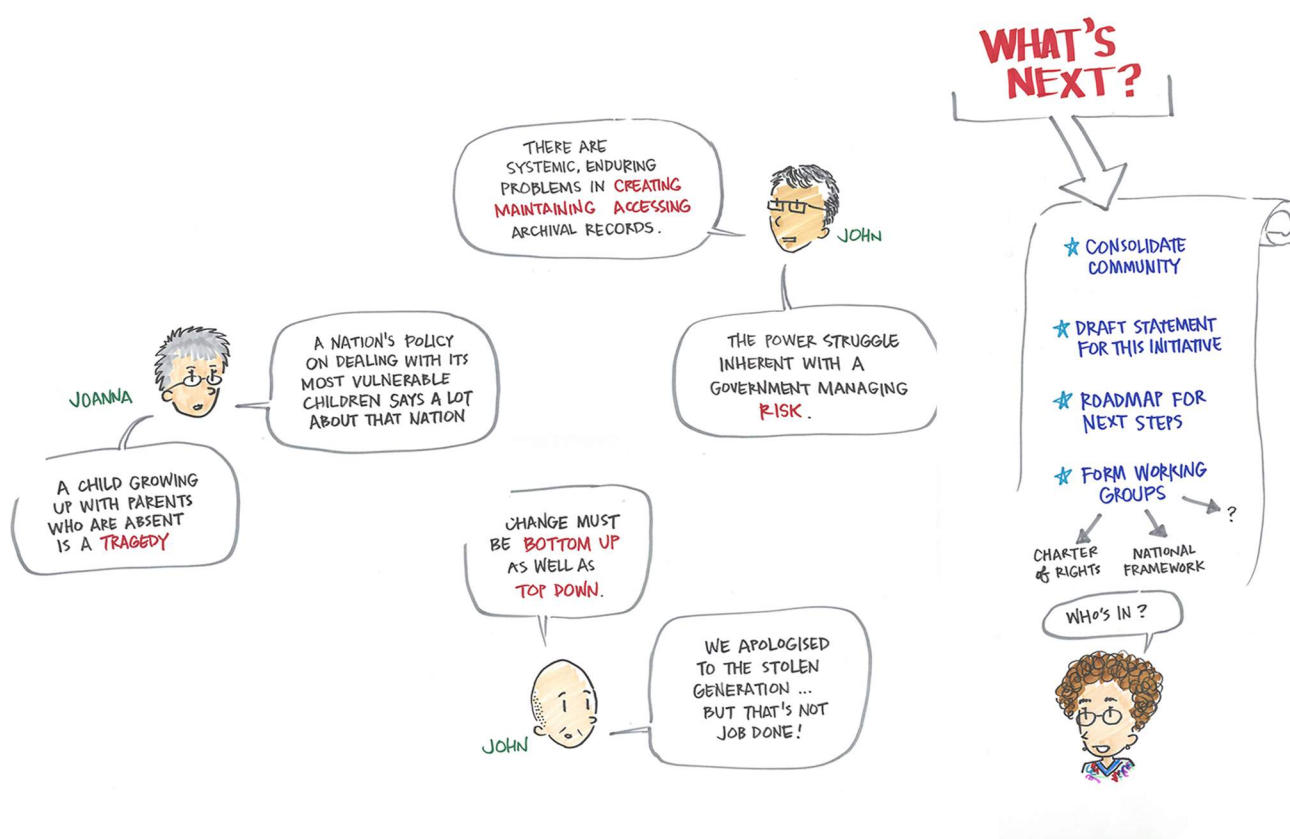
**Professor John McDonald**  
Dean of Arts and Education, Federation University Australia



**Dr Joanna Penglase**  
Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN)



**Dr Joanne Evans**  
ARC Future Fellow, Faculty of IT, Monash University



# Imagined Archives

By Nina Lewis

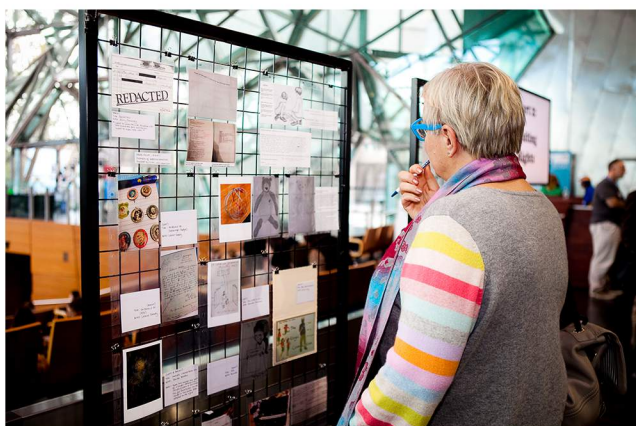
Imagine a participatory art project aimed at developing archives inspired by creativity and respect...



The Imagined Archives project installed a “pop up” exhibition in the Deakin Edge at Melbourne’s Federation Square. A creative extension of the Summit’s focus on recordkeeping inspired by rights, participation, and respect; the Imagined Archive exhibition took shape as a group art project bringing together works from differing perspectives and stages of completion.

CLAN (Care Leavers Australasia Network) were a partner organisation in planning the National Summit, and helped make the voice of Forgotten Australians visible in the exhibition. An initial mail out through CLAN’s membership network assisted the Imagined Archives project to connect directly with a number of Care Leavers, while others chose to contribute their stories and images via CLAN’s leadership group.

The exhibition foregrounded CLAN’s contributions in Postcard Show (small artworks and documentary photographs submitted in response to themes of “rights in records” and “the imagined archive”) and Alternative Facts. The Alternative Facts installation is a working model for a digital artwork that renders counter narratives to institutional records. Care Leavers choose to share contested statements of ‘fact’ that were recorded on their files and ‘legitimised’ as part of the archival record. These words display onscreen, then are erased and overwritten by alternative statements of identity or circumstance provided by the person at the centre of the record.



Summit participant looking at images from the Postcard Show.



(L-R) CLAN representatives Leonie Sheedy, Joanna Penglase, Jacqueline Wilson, Frank Golding and Vlad Selakovic standing next to CLAN’s Charter of Rights to Childhood Records.

Bringing the experience of Forgotten Australians to the Imagined Archive from another perspective was the Parragirls video installation *It's Time for Transparency*. This artwork addresses stigma, secrecy, erasure and exposure in institutional records and personal narratives and makes a powerful call for change in the name of children's futures.

Produced in 2016 for the "Living Traces" exhibition, the artwork was created by Jenny McNally in conjunction with the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project (PFFP), a social history and contemporary art project based at the site of the former Parramatta Girls Home.

In keeping with the aims of the Summit as maintaining a future focus as well as a past perspective, the Imagined Archive exhibition also included artwork by young people with more recent experience in out of home care.

We were fortunate to be able to display a group show by the newly formed and multitalented Aboriginal Youth Art Collective, a social enterprise offshoot of VACCA's art mentoring program. These programs recognise art as bridge and bond, as the VACCA website emphasises: "by strengthening children and young people's cultural awareness, identity and connection to community we build their resilience."



Putting the pieces together: (L-R) Annelie de Villiers (archivist), Amanda Shaw (South Australia's Guardian for Children and Young People), and Jim Luthy (CLAN advocate) take part in the Missing Pieces activity.

Contributions by a second group of young care leavers were largely steered by Isla and Rhiannon (Rizz) - two young women introduced to the project by the CREATE Foundation. Isla and Rizz were also the presenters on Day 1 of the Summit of "Missing Pieces", a participatory session that they devised to underline the critical interconnection of records and identity, emphasising that people working with records need to understand them not simply as files, but as part of people's lives.

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Dr Nina Lewis is a Research Fellow in the Monash Faculty of Information Technology and coordinator for the Imagined Archives project. She has substantial professional experience working in the archives sector, and is a previous Program Manager of the Find and Connect web resource. If you have an interest in the Imagined Archives research project, you can email [nina.lewis@monash.edu](mailto:nina.lewis@monash.edu).

# Notes

