



MEDIA ALERT



Suicide Survivors Pause to Remember

A special candlelight memorial has been held to pay tribute to victims of suicide and help raise awareness within the broader community of the devastating impacts of this silent killer.

Surviving friends and family members gathered at the New Farm Park Rotunda on Friday night, where a circle of remembrance was formed.

The event was organised by the Survivors of Suicide Bereavement Support Association Inc. (SOSBSA). SOSBSA is a not-for-profit community organisation dedicated to providing care and support to survivors of suicide.

SOSBSA President Cherrie Cran said the memorial was an important way for those left behind to continue to heal after suicide.

"It's a public acknowledgement that suicide exists and we're taking a moment to honour not only the ones we've lost personally, but also *all* people who have died to suicide."

For Cherrie, the annual event is a celebration of those whose lives had ended too soon.

"It's a very personal evening, as the families read a choice of poem or prose about their person and a play song that reminds them of that person.

"It's not very often that we celebrate the lives of those who died to suicide."

Suicide continues to be a leading cause of preventable death in Australia, with recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicating 2272 deaths from intentional self-harm in 2011. The figure contrasts starkly against the 1277 road fatalities recorded that same year.

"We lose more people to suicide than we do in road accidents... And that doesn't touch on the effect of suicide loss on those who are left behind and the impact that has on the community", said Cherrie.

"People who have lost someone to suicide are at a greater risk of suicide themselves."

Among those honoured at this year's event was Cherrie's own son, Bede McMullan, who lost his life in 2010.

"It's one night a year where, amongst friends, I get to acknowledge that he was a gift to me for 19 years," she said.

The Candlelight Memorial is an annual event of SOSBSA, having been held each year since the association's incorporation in 1998. More information on the SOSBSA does in the community can be found at sosbsa.org.au.

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