**Sydney Opera House suicide memorial service offers support, comfort and hope for those who have lost loved ones**

*For immediate release: Tuesday 10 September 2019*

People who have been impacted by the death of a loved one or friend by suicide will have the opportunity to come together to remember and grieve at a memorial service at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on 12 September 2019.

Wesley LifeForce Suicide Memorial Services are held annually for the families, friends and communities bereaved by suicide to gather in a spirit of comfort, support and hope, and to honour the memory of their loved ones.

**All media are invited to the service at the Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall Northern Foyer on Thursday 12 September** **from noon to 1pm.**

The CEO/Superintendent of Wesley Mission, the Rev Keith V Garner AM, who will deliver a message of hope, said the loss by suicide is a devastating experience.

“The grief associated with suicide is complex and very difficult. Family members and friends can feel abandoned or rejected. Myriad questions often remain unanswered and, unfortunately, stigma remains,” Mr Garner said.

“The death of a loved one to suicide is life-changing for those left behind. The process of mending a broken heart does not take a week, a month or a year but a lifetime.

“The road to healing is not only long, but can be bumpy with many obstacles in the way. However, by drawing upon inner resources and by being in touch with our feelings, we can find an appropriate attitude to the past, the present and the future.

“The annual Wesley LifeForce Suicide Memorial Service is an opportunity for those bereaved by suicide to know that they are not alone and are part of a genuine and caring community.”

**Key moments in the service:**

Welcome by ABC presenter Simon Marnie.

Shared story from clinical psychologist Damian Rayner.

Interview with Tania Tuckerman.

Musical performance by Katie Fuentes.

Message of hope from the Rev Keith V Garner AM.

Moment of silence and reflection.

Flower ceremony.

Final blessing from Rev Dr Rick Dacey.

Releasing of a dove.

There will be an opportunity for participants to place messages remembering the lives of those lost to suicide on a memorial wall. Messages can also be posted on an online [memorial wall](https://www.wesleymission.org.au/find-a-service/mental-health-and-hospitals/suicide-prevention/memorial-services/memorial-wall/). People who have been impacted by suicide can contact Lifeline, a 24-hour Crisis Support Service phone 13 11 14.

**Media please note:** Most people – including media professionals – have been touched by suicide. For many people, the service will be one of mixed emotions. We ask that you respect the privacy of people who are attending and those participating in the service.

For media reporting guidelines on suicide click [here](https://everymind.org.au/resources/mindframe-for-media-professionals).

**About Wesley LifeForce**

Established in 1995, Wesley LifeForce began as a response to the growing number of suicide deaths in Australia. It is a national program providing suicide prevention services that educate and empower local communities, supporting people most at risk. More than 40,000 people have been trained through the program. For further information click [here](https://www.wesleymission.org.au/find-a-service/mental-health-and-hospitals/suicide-prevention/wesley-lifeforce/).

**Media enquiries:**

The CEO/Superintendent of Wesley Mission the Rev Keith V Garner AM is available for interview.

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