



## Supporting victims OF HOMICIDE

Our highly skilled Homicide Family Support Workers will support a family through this difficult time, focussing fully on the family and their needs.

**No-one ever expects the Police at their door telling them their loved one has been killed by homicide.**

It is however an awful reality for around 70 families a year in New Zealand.

The statistics are chilling. Young men are over represented and approximately a third of homicide victims are Māori. Family violence accounts for around half of all homicides, and shamefully includes on average, nine child deaths a year.

The impact of a homicide is immense and what should be a private time of grieving can become very public.

The family's life is suddenly intertwined with official processes, media attention, and facets of their loved one's private life are no longer private. They're talked about by people who never knew them, over and over. There are so many questions, none of which will ever have a satisfactory answer.

The family's day to day life is severely affected. Their community and all that they know, may just not feel the same, they may not know what is normal anymore. Their lives have been changed forever.

While no-one can take away the pain or grief, Victim Support can help people get through it.



They will help with emotional support and be their rock, and also help in very practical ways. They can assist with funeral arrangements, provide access to funding, advocate for the family, organise counselling and accommodation. They'll liaise with WINZ, Oranga Tamariki, cultural groups, and anything else the family needs.

They'll help them navigate the justice process, be by their side in Court and assist with Victim Impact Statements. Everything they do is focused on helping and supporting the family through this time, and beyond.

Without professional support, the journey for those bereaved by homicide would be unthinkable.

### HOW WE WORK

**Specialist trained Homicide Family Support Workers are assigned to a homicide case as soon as possible.**

They will provide support for the multitude of logistical, emotional, judicial and physical support needs that the victims (family of the deceased), need.

We operate a hybrid model of support for our homicide work. Nationwide, we have a team of highly trained volunteer Homicide Support Workers, and staff Homicide Support Workers in Auckland and Christchurch.

They are supervised by Homicide Support Specialists, who oversee all homicide cases, providing co-ordination, liaison and case management for the cases' entirety.

Following an overwhelmingly positive pilot in 2015, this hybrid model provides a high quality service to victims' families at a highly traumatic time.

Wherever we are needed we'll be there



Source: It's not OK!





## From Kevin's desk

People often say to our team that they couldn't do the work we do. That it's just too hard.

They're right. It is hard work, and it's not for everyone. But those that do, our Support Workers, are dedicated, empathetic and highly trained.

Our Homicide Support Workers are further specialist trained, as the impact and demands on those affected by homicide are immense and long reaching.

In shock and distraught, a family can't quietly grieve and say goodbye to their loved one. They suddenly have Police, official processes, media, multiple

agencies and others in their life, and no concept of what's normal any more.

It's awful for the family.

It's vital there's support available to help them through the toughest time of their life.

Our homicide Support Workers know what to do. They gently step into the families lives and help. They understand the processes, can prepare the family for what's coming up, guide them through, advocate, and just be there for them. They're focused on the needs of the family, to support them from the time of the incident, through to trial and beyond.

We do this, because no-one should have to suffer through the aftermath of any crime, alone.

**Ngā mihi**  
**Kevin Tso, Chief Executive**

## A day in the life...

### PATRICIA

*Our Editor recently spent a day with Patricia, a Homicide Family Support Worker.*

**No day is typical for Patricia, as a new homicide referral or a current client needing urgent help, means plans can quickly change.**

I asked her what would happen if a referral were to come through now.

"I'd head out to meet the Officer in Charge (OC) to fully understand the situation and meet the family," she said. "If the family home is the crime scene, I'll arrange accommodation and personal essentials for them as they can't enter the home. I'll liaise with the OC to get the paperwork which allows Victim Support to release funds to the family."

She'd do a family tree and needs assessment to establish the deceased's wider family and to get support for all underway. Needs can vary considerably during the support period and from person to person.

Patricia works collaboratively with her valuable volunteer colleagues, particularly as they may have been the initial person on the case if the homicide happened during the weekend or at night.

Given a homicide trial can take several weeks, Patricia spends quite a lot of time at the High Court, supporting the family and sitting at their side. "I'll do what I can to ease the burden for the family. I'll read the Victim Impact Statement if they can't manage it. It can be so difficult for the family, particularly the tough days when family give evidence or hear the minute details of how their loved one died."

"Some people attend Court every day and some don't. Some don't want to face the perpetrator any longer than they must or hear the forensic evidence. It's terribly gruelling for them."

After a morning of phone and email work, we make some home visits.

While each family we visit has differing circumstances, each has been blindsided by the cruel death of their loved one.

Patricia skilfully glides through the conversations, enquiring where things are at since they last spoke. She provides updates and discusses next steps, answers questions and clarifies aspects of the police investigation and judicial processes they were unsure of. Some of the conversation is tough, some downright heart-breaking.



All receive reassurance that she is there for them, she will sit with them in Court if they want, they can call her, they are not alone.

But she will do more than that. She'll do anything the families need.

Some families like to have a Court familiarisation, or have a screen between them and the perpetrator, or be ushered in and out of Court, diverted away from anyone they don't want to see. They'll be looked after through this ordeal.

Practical matters are addressed too. Financial support through the Ministry of Justice Victim Assistance Scheme can provide counselling, and accommodation while attending hearings. There's advocacy and assistance with the Police, WINZ, cultural groups and others, and help connecting the family to other avenues of support.

I note several things on these visits.

Gentle yet professional, warm and empathetic, Patricia is quite clearly highly thought of by each family. The genuine welcome into their homes, lives and struggles and the high level of trust was immediately palpable. I'm reminded of what Wellington based volunteer Support Worker Barbara had told me some time ago – *"when I go out on a call, I'm stepping into someone's life, and I might be there for months or years."*

Homicide clearly turns families lives upside down.

They've suffered. They've lived through something no-one should have to, yet it continues to dominate their lives as they move through the justice process – while perhaps wondering whether they will get justice for their loved one.

It's completely changed their living and financial circumstances, and cruelly brought someone they don't wish to know at all, into their lives.

Yet despite all this, their strength and resilience is clear. It hasn't been easy and there are still bumps on the road ahead, but their warmth and gratitude is visible. Patricia's repeatedly thanked for being that person that was and continues to be, there for them, as they wouldn't have wanted to get through alone.

"I love my job," said Patricia. "The depth of despair and turmoil that people suffer goes beyond comprehension, but somehow these brave people manage to display a courage and fortitude which I admire and respect so much. Anything I can do to help them through this journey I will, and it's a privilege to help them out as much as I can."

## My story...

### MELISSA HEARD

**Melissa was only six years old when she lost her father to homicide – and her life changed forever.**

Everything went numb. She experienced nightmares and had fears no child should ever experience.

The pain did not go away and trickled on to other things in her life. Not knowing how to cope, as a teenager and young woman she rebelled and disregarded her life. She was living a life that seemed like something out of a movie, not something that really happened to people. She was always feeling lost and out of place, with an overbearing feeling that something bad was going to happen to her.

Around the age of 19 years, Melissa took an enormous step and approached Victim Support and asked for help.

From there, the road was long and winding. Melissa found a Counsellor that she could work well with and began the journey from her deep trauma to a good place.

Over time she used her pain and grief to propel her forward. She needed to get to a place of being content and nightmare free. She found that while the pain of losing her father never goes away, she could work on herself and change her world.



Need support?

Call now

**0800  
842 846**

"I was a Daddy's girl at heart and I used his love to push me forward and to do everything in his memory in a positive way and I think about how he would like me to be. It's taken a lot of effort and I've had to push myself to get there," said Melissa.

When asked what advice she'd give to anyone in a similar situation, Melissa said, "it's hard, but seek help, get counselling and do the steps because it does work. Go through the motions of grief and look after yourself, including regular exercise. Do things that will keep your loved one's memory alive in a positive way and try to use the pain to push forward in life."

"Victim Support was a good starting point as it was one of the only places where people understood my situation," she said.

Today, Melissa is doing really well. She's achieved a great deal, personally and professionally, is in a good place, has a lot of positive things in her life, and thinks her dad would be really proud.

## ADVISORY GROUP GIVES HOMICIDE VICTIMS A VOICE

**Victim Support's Homicide Advisory Group met in Wellington last month to discuss issues facing victims of homicide and how Victim Support can best ensure their needs are met.**

The group is made up of people who have lost a loved one to homicide, and who generously give their time to ensure the service is as effective as possible.

The group discussed their experiences of the New Zealand justice system and the changes they would like to see

Victim Support advocating for on their behalf, as well as providing crucial feedback on how Victim Support made a difference in their journey and could make a difference for others.



From left to right: Lynda West, Rawinia Tahu, Wendy Marshall, Alan Marshall, David Beavan, Rachel Beavan (absent – Jo Todd)



*Taken.Life*

**Following a homicide, the family of the loved one may wish for their memory to live on and to celebrate their life. They might do this publicly, privately, or both.**

*Taken* is an online space for families to make and share a public tribute to a loved one they have lost through murder/homicide, thereby giving their loved one a voice.

It provides a place for all those affected by homicide to come together, remember and celebrate the loved one that was taken. It also provides a place for people on those outer ripples to show their support for the grieving families and unite together as a community to work towards a better society.

As one of the *Taken* site founders, Wendy Marshall, whose son was killed in 2011, said "*Taken* is a place to collectively honour the lives of the people we love and miss every single day."

You can view or make a tribute, or find out more about *Taken*, at [www.taken.life](http://www.taken.life)



# 2018 VICTIM SUPPORT LOTTERY

## Our popular fundraiser is back!

Tickets for this year's Victim Support Lottery go on sale 1 October 2018 and run through until the end of November.

We're delighted to again be partnered by Honda New Zealand Limited, with a 2018 Honda HR-V S, valued at \$30,785, including on road costs, as first prize! "The Honda HR-V S continues to be a fantastic drawcard for our lottery, and the lucky winner could be spending their summer holidays driving around in



Win a  
**Honda  
HR-V S!**

style!" said Cam Cotter, Victim Support's GM Fundraising & Communications.

There's a stream of lifestyle prizes plus a bonus prize of seven nights in the Gold Coast!

Tickets are \$5 each or a book of five tickets for \$20. To buy tickets, contact your local Victim Support office or download an order form at [victimsupport.org.nz/victim-support-lottery](http://victimsupport.org.nz/victim-support-lottery).

If you can help us sell tickets, please contact your local Victim Support office to help.



## THANK YOU *Southern Trust!*

### We're extremely grateful to the team at Southern Trust for their recent generosity.

Their \$50,000 funding provides a contribution to our operating costs in rural and provincial hubs, spread over eleven of our districts.

"Southern Trust has a wide reach in our communities, and we were fortunate to receive support toward our operations in Southland, Whangarei and a number of areas in between," said Cam Cotter, GM Fundraising & Communications. "Our staff and volunteers provide a much-needed service nationwide, every day, but thanks to funders like Southern Trust we can gain funding for some of our more rural hubs, which is invaluable."

The Southern Trust is funding partner to a full range of community groups and charitable causes across New Zealand, with a particular focus on education, community, amateur sport, arts and culture.

Our sincere thanks to  
The Southern Trust!



## Run for Victim Support!

### Want an excuse to get fit and support a great cause at the same time?!

Join Team Victim Support as a charity walker or runner in this year's ASB Auckland Marathon on Sunday 28 October.

There's a range of distances to suit everyone – from the 5km course that is suitable for families, through to 12km, half marathon and full marathon. Walkers can participate in any category.

Charity runners/walkers simply gather donors through their online sponsorship page. They'll receive free entry in to the event, training plans and expert advice, entry into the hospitality area, and more.

Grab a friend, colleagues or family or come along solo, everyone is welcome in Team Victim Support!

To find out more, contact Robyn on 027 705 6562 or [robyn.scurrah@victimsupport.org.nz](mailto:robyn.scurrah@victimsupport.org.nz)



(Cut here)

**Yes!** Here is my donation to help victims of crime and trauma

Mr  Mrs  Miss  Ms  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name

Postal address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Value of donation  \$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts over \$5 are tax deductible.

Internet banking – BNZ 020500 0493163 00 – use your surname and NL0918 as references

Cheque – made payable to Victim Support

Credit card – please charge to my

Mastercard  Visa  Amex

Name of cardholder

Card Number

Expiry date  /  Signature

Please send me information about remembering Victim Support in my Will.

Please return this form to:  
Victim Support, Freepost 100819, PO Box 3017, Wellington 6140

Thank you for your support.