

# MEDIA RELEASE



*For immediate release  
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## **Helping families survive the loss of a baby**

### **Mildura volunteer training for parent-supporters, June 25 and 26.**

A local support group is emerging in Mildura, providing much needed peer-support for people who have suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death.

SANDS is a non-profit support organisation that offers peer-to-peer support to parents grieving such a loss. Established in 1983, SANDS has been supporting parents for nearly 30 years and has also been educating health workers and medical professionals in the care of bereaved parents. Importantly, all SANDS' parent-supporters are trained volunteers who can truly understand and empathise because they have all been there themselves.

Due to the new local support group developing, the SANDS (Vic) Training Subcommittee will be visiting Mildura to train parent-supporters to provide telephone and group support. Training will take place on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 June and is open to people who have experienced the loss of a baby at least 12 months ago and who share a desire to volunteer to help others and be part of a dynamic organisation.

SANDS parent-supporters provide immediate and ongoing support to bereaved parents through phone support, monthly group support meetings and an Older Loss group for women who experienced their loss many years ago.

According to Anne Bowers, the SANDS (Vic) Network Coordinator, training gives volunteers the opportunity to make sense of their loss, expand their awareness and skills and give back to the community.

"It's important for grieving parents to know that understanding and support is available from other parents who have been there themselves," said Anne.

"The real value of peer-support is that sharing with others who have had a similar experience breaks the sense of feeling isolated and alone in your suffering. When friends and family are unable to help or can't understand why you're still grieving, the feelings of emptiness, loneliness and confusion are much harder to navigate.

"With SANDS' support, parents feel understood and, through relating to others' experiences, are better able to see their intense grief as normal. Understanding and accepting their grief helps minimise grief-related problems down the track."

If you're interested in attending the parent-supporter training, call SANDS Victoria on (03) 9899 0217 before Monday 20 June.

**If you need support following a miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death, call 13 000 SANDS (13 000 72637) to speak with a telephone supporter or visit [www.sandsvic.org.au](http://www.sandsvic.org.au)**

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**Further information/to arrange an interview please contact:  
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