



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party



MEDIA RELEASE

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Giving Hope to Hope Bereavement Services

Stuart Grimley MP has asked State Government Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley to meet with HOPE Bereavement Services CEO Salli Hickford about possible funding opportunities available to them, as they face possible closure.

Geelong's HOPE Bereavement Services needs \$150,000 if it is to keep its doors open beyond the second half of 2020; with current funding, they don't see a future beyond April 2020.

After meeting with HOPE's CEO Salli Hickford in October, Mr Grimley was concerned by the lack of financial certainty the service had, given the positive impact it was bringing the Geelong community.

HOPE are a not-for-profit organisation who provide grief counselling but also run support groups and provide educational resources to those in need.

In its infancy HOPE served about 50 families, but it currently supports over 250 families from Geelong to Colac and Ballarat, who are grieving a loved one by providing them with free counselling and group support.

Of particular resonance to Mr Grimley was the connection HOPE had to emergency services personnel as a referral service. Prior to being a Member of Parliament, Mr Grimley was a police officer in the Geelong area and made contact frequently with family members who had lost loved ones and who needed support. He said it was comforting to know "there was someone local, available and qualified to help them grieve."

They also offer memorials and remembrance services for those who have lost loved ones, including young siblings and have local partnerships such as with St Luke's Men's Shed who build *Angel Boxes*; burial and memory boxes for babies.

Those interested can make a donation by visiting [this link](#).

Stuart Grimley MP said in Parliament:

"Presently no government support is received and they run on a shoe-string budget. I have been told that without significant financial help, Hope will in fact have no hope and cease to exist by April next year.

Would the Minister be open to meeting with Hope's CEO Salli Hickford to discuss the prospects of Government assistance, grants or future funding opportunities?"

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"When someone dies, whether it be a newborn baby or a grandmother or uncle, the grief projects onto those who loved that person. And we need to provide them with support.

As a former police officer, I can say that this type of grief support for emergency services personnel is invaluable.

"I hope the Minister will sit down with Salli [Hickford] in the near future and discuss Hope's future financial situation because what they are doing is really important for those who are grieving."

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