



NSW POLICE LEGACY

Position Statement: Communicating the Death of a Police Officer

Generally, we do not make public comment on the death of police officers (serving or otherwise).

In certain high-profile circumstances a police officer's death may be reported in the media and become a matter of public interest. In this instance we may make comment depending on the situation, taking into consideration if details of the death have already been made public and if the family have been consulted.

With regards to suicides of serving and non-serving officers, the Board will endeavour to seek expert informed advice on how we communicate this important issue in the future. We acknowledge that we have to do more, in particular to validate the grief and loss for the families, their colleagues, and Police Legatees, whilst also respecting the protection and privacy of individual families.

As we care for and support those affected by suicide, we are guided by the principle of 'do-no-harm'. We aim to be informed and guided by the needs of the family that is bereaved, those in our 'police family' with lived experience, and experts in this sector.

Grief and trauma are complex, and as a result we, as a community, need to be cautious to reduce potential risk of unintended harm to vulnerable community members. Public discussion about suicide, and in particular a specific death, can be upsetting and affect people negatively. As such, we will collaborate with services that specialise in safe and responsible public discussion of suicide.

Above all else, we respect the right of a family to grieve in peace. Our overriding concern is for the health and wellbeing of the family members left behind. It is their right to decide the time and the place for any such announcement to be made. It remains our solemn duty to care for them, both in the hour of their first need, and in the weeks, months, and years of adjustment that follow.

We consider our Police Legatees like family, and like a family we are there in good times and bad.

We have worked with the organisation Everymind (everymind.org.au) to develop this Position Statement.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance there is support available.

NSW Police Legacy 02 9264 1311 | www.policelegacynsw.org.au

BACKUP for Life 02 9264 4531 | bit.ly/BACKUPforlife

Lifeline: 13 11 14 | www.lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 | www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78 | mensline.org.au

beyondblue: 1300 22 4636 | www.beyondblue.org.au

Life in Mind: 02 4924 6900 | www.lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

Head to Health | headtohealth.gov.au