

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General



Sunday, 15 November 2020

RECOGNISING LOSS GIVES SOLACE TO BEREAVED PARENTS

A new commemorative certificate launched today will provide greater recognition for Victorians who have experienced the tragic loss of a child in early pregnancy from next month, in an important step to provide comfort to grieving parents.

Formal acknowledgement of early pregnancy loss will be available to Victorians from 16 November in the form of a commemorative certificate from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria.

Early pregnancy loss is one that occurs prior to 20 weeks and is not formally registered as either a birth or a death. Memorialising this loss through a commemorative certificate can provide solace to those affected.

The certificate will feature artwork from artist Till Heike and incorporates Victorian flora and fauna, including a pair of helmeted honeyeaters – the Victorian state bird.

The project immediately resonated with Ms Heike, who has herself experienced early pregnancy loss. It provides an important way for parents to make memories and acknowledge their child.

The initiative is the result of a partnership between the Registry and SANDS Victoria, who provide support to Victorians who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death.

Victorians can register their interest in applying for the early pregnancy loss commemorative certificate ahead of its release by visiting bdm.vic.gov.au. The certificate will be free of charge.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

“When parents experience early pregnancy loss, neither a birth or death certificate is issued – these certificates are a meaningful way to recognise this significant event.”

“The certificate has been so beautifully and thoughtfully designed – thank you to Till Heike for sharing her art and her experience in a way that will give so much comfort to others.”

“It’s important we remember those children who were taken too soon – we hope that these certificates provide some solace to parents and families who’ve been affected by such a tragic loss.”

Quote attributable to Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria James Lawson

“When parents experience early pregnancy loss, neither a birth or death certificate is issued - these beautifully illustrated certificates are a meaningful way for the Registry to recognise this significant event.”