

Introducing



Hope, Community, Understanding





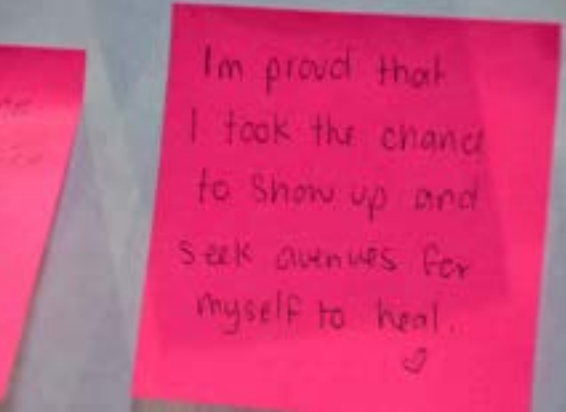
Our purpose

We support and advocate for young widowed people, inspiring and empowering them to navigate their grief and rebuild their lives after the death of their partner.

Since commencement in 2016 with 17 members, we have empowered more than 2,250 widowed young people to grow and heal, through our resources and programs designed to assist them through the crisis of loss, the bereavement process and beyond.

Eight years on, we are Australia's only dedicated national charity providing free and accessible support to young widowed people. What started as a volunteer-run organisation, has evolved as our community and the need for support continues to grow.

While targeted at widowed people aged up to their 50s, we welcome people of any age, gender relationship structure, race, religion, or sexual orientation.



"Getting help as a man is difficult, there just aren't that many places equipped specifically to deal with men and their grief.

I literally didn't know what to do. So I went online and that's ultimately how I found out about First Light.

The best thing you can do is meet people who are in the same position as you. You look at everyone who attends Camp Widow and there are hundreds of people and hundreds of stories. We were from all over Australia, but we all had the exact same experience.

Everyone has a different story about what happened to them, and you realise that while what happened to you isn't normal, you're normal."



**Aus Watt, widowed in his early 40's.
Attended Camp Widow in 2022**

Our impact

Our programs and services improve the mental, emotional and social wellbeing of widowed people, by providing practical support along with a caring community.

Young widowed people experience multiple vulnerabilities, including:

- psychological (e.g. loneliness, depression, lowered morale, cognitive loss)
- physical (e.g. impacts on health/sleep)
- social (e.g. damaged/lost relationships)
- employment challenges and/or financial disadvantage (e.g. lost partner income, changed work)
- practical (e.g. new roles/responsibilities, child raising).

Feedback from our members consistently shows they feel less isolated, misunderstood, overwhelmed and hopeless, after connecting with others through our programs.

Through our work, we have seen anecdotal evidence that widowed people who feel supported and understood while grieving, are more likely to resume work duties sooner; are better equipped to care for their immediate family members; and need less ongoing assistance from external resources.

A 2021 study undertaken at Edith Cowan University surveyed more than 600 young widowed people and found:

62% were financially insecure

65% suffered from impaired functioning

43% met diagnostic criteria for Prolonged Grief Disorder

68% experienced low mental wellbeing with probable depression and high rates of psychological distress



According to the 2021 Census, there are more than 55,000 widowed people under the age of 55 in Australia. 18,000 of these are under 45.



Our reach

- 1,640 members and subscribers
- 560 Newly Widowed Packs sent
- 23 Local catch up locations
- 800 Camp Widow attendees
- 1,260 widowed people connected via our online community support forum
- 2030+ widowed people connected at in-person catch up events
- 16,000 website visitors in 2023/24 FY
- 4,660 social media followers (90% female)
- 46,656 social media impacts in 2023/24 FY

“Being around people who can relate is hugely healing as it helps you to feel like you’re not so alone, you’re not the odd one out.

When you’re around other widowed people, you don’t have to be strong and you can talk about all of the different elements of what it means to be widowed. Sharing your story and journey with others is very therapeutic.”

Cobie Lee
Widowed in 2013



Ways to support us

There are many ways to make a meaningful and vital contribution to the work we do, such as making a bequest to First Light, donating to one of our specific programs or resources, volunteering or fundraising for us.

We welcome the opportunity to speak to you further about the work we do to make a difference in the lives of young windowed people.



www.firstlight.org.au



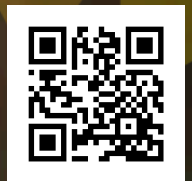
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We are covered by Item 1 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.
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