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Media Release

CHILD LOSS SUPPORT LINE

SIDS and Kids WA has announced changes to the *Child Loss Support Line* to better meet the needs of grieving parents.

The support line, which is run by volunteers who have experienced the trauma of losing a child, has been upgraded to better ensure all bereaved parents have 24 hours access to support regardless of whether they live in Perth or regional WA.

The support line is coordinated by a call centre which allocates the calls to the most appropriate volunteer supporters.

Tragically, 200 babies are stillborn in WA each year, SIDS and Kids WA provides a range of services including grief counselling to bereaved families for as long as required, at no charge. One thousand counselling sessions were provided last year, person-to-person, via the phone and email.

SIDS and Kids WA chief executive officer Shauna Gaebler said, the service provides an extremely important connection for parents, families and friends trying to deal with the grief of losing a child, providing an important link with the outside world.

“The changes to the *Child Loss Support Line* will provide major benefits to families living in regional areas, who are unable to travel to Perth to access the person to person sessions”.

Peter and Mia Hicks, who live in Kalgoorlie, experienced the tragic loss of their daughter Lucy when she was stillborn in April last year.

Mia Hicks said this development is fantastic especially in light of the limited resources available to Kalgoorlie parents and I imagine any other regional parents in WA who are faced with the nightmare of child loss.

“There is a significant lack of services available locally to assist with child loss and specifically relating to grief around child loss. The distance does cause issues for parents accessing face to face services, but the telephone line fills the gap” she said.

The Child Loss Telephone Support Line number is 1800 686 780.

For more information about SIDS and Kids WA go to www.sidsandkidswa.org

For more information please contact Nicole Bailey 0401 903 805