

**NSW POLICE FORCE**

**MEDIA RELEASE**



## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Sudden Traumatic Death Response Team Forum**

Issued at 4pm, Tuesday 28 October 2008

#### **Trauma Forum - relating to sudden traumatic death.**

The Lifeline Central Coast Response Team is later this week hosting a forum for service providers to raise awareness of trauma relating to sudden traumatic deaths.

The 'Trauma Forum' is for emergency services, government and non-government service providers and is being held on the Central Coast on Thursday 30 October.

Mr. John Arms, Gosford Local Court Registrar and Coroner and Suicide Safety Network (Central Coast) Inc. President, said, "The Central Coast, like other communities, experience sudden traumatic deaths.

"Recent deaths include house fires, motor vehicle accidents, drowning, work place accidents, accidents, homicide and suicide. These deaths highlighted the need to establish a coordinated approach between emergency services, government and non-government service providers."

Lifeline Central Coast (NSW) has taken the lead role working in partnership with the Central Coast Coroner's Office and NSW Police Force's Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water Local Area Commands.

By the nature of policing, officers come into direct contact with people impacted by sudden traumatic death on a regular basis and often become 'accidental counsellors'. This new service allows officers to refer families, friends, bystanders and witnesses to the Lifeline Response Team for follow-up.

The role of the Response Team is to provide 'psychological first aid' which includes personal, emotional, physical, financial and social welfare support.

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A Reference Group has been established to assist Lifeline during this process which includes identifying clear referral pathways for the next level of care if required.

Lesley West, CEO of Lifeline Central Coast (NSW) said, "Sudden, unexpected and traumatic loss can leave survivors bereaved, dazed and vulnerable and shatters the world as they knew it.

"The grief process is often intensified since there is no opportunity to prepare for the loss or to say good-bye. Families are forced to face the loss of a loved one instantaneously and without warning," said Lesley West.

The Trauma Forum for emergency services, government and non-government service providers is an ideal opportunity to discuss trauma-related issues which often arise as a result of sudden traumatic death.

The Trauma Forum aims to increase awareness and understanding of the impact a sudden traumatic death, such as suicide and homicide, has on a community. The forum will also provide an opportunity for professional development, networking and information on services available, access and referral.

The Lifeline Response Team has assisted more than 400 people since its establishment in September 2006.

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