

Providing hope and
understanding to bereaved
parents across Australia

Sands Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020



1 in 4

pregnancies end
in miscarriage,
impacting 103,000
families every year.

6

babies are stillborn
every day in Australia,
impacting 2,225
families every year.

2

babies die everyday
within their first 28
days, impacting 737
families every year.

Introduction from the Chair and CEO of Sands Australia

It is often said that the only constant in today's complex and fast-moving world is change.

Sands has existed for over 35 years and in that time has seen many changes and challenges in how we deliver our services to bereaved parents across Australia. Sadly, the one area that hasn't experienced much change throughout this period is the rate of miscarriage, stillbirths or newborn deaths.

Despite the many advancements in technology, research and medicine, approximately 1 in 4 pregnancies will result in miscarriage across Australia today and 1 baby in 120 births will be stillborn or die within the first 28 days.

We have made big strides over the years in supporting bereaved parents. We have delivered face-to-face support groups across many states and territories. We developed and launched one of the first 24/7 support lines for bereaved parents. We launched the first live web chat service, Sands LiveChat. We have also delivered thousands of hours of information sessions for midwives and other healthcare professionals and we have developed, printed and distributed hundreds of thousands of information brochures for bereaved parents.

But there is still much to do and we are pleased to have developed our first ever organisation strategy to provide us with a clear direction and vision for the next five years. Although not every bereaved parent will require support or information services, many do. As such, Sands has a responsibility to ensure we are there for all bereaved parents, regardless of their location in Australia or cultural background.

Sands exists to provide hope and understanding following the death of a baby as we too have been through the same devastating grief. We are here to provide high quality support and information to bereaved parents and to improve the care received by healthcare professionals.

The next five years are an important milestone for the organisation. We are ambitious and are motivated by one clear message; to ensure that all bereaved parents across Australia have the opportunity to access our services.

With this in mind, this strategy sets out our plans for the next five years. We must be more accessible and reach out to more

parents. We must improve the way we deliver our support services, improve the way we provide information to bereaved parents and provide more training and guidance for healthcare professionals. Finally, we must build a financially stable organisation for the future.

However, we cannot do this alone. We will work with our long term funders in federal government, with our current committed corporate supporters, with the individuals who are so generous to us as well as with other voluntary organisations who all have a strong commitment to ensuring no bereaved parent is left alone and isolated in our society.

We thank you for your continuous support and look forward to working with you to deliver our ambitious, but much needed vision.



Lyndy Bowden
Chair of Sands Australia



Andre Carvalho
Chief Executive Officer

VISION

Sands is the voice for bereaved parents and their families across Australia, promoting healthy grieving and bringing understanding and hope when a baby dies.

MISSION

Sands is a community of bereaved parents providing support, information and education to other bereaved parents and their families across Australia that have experienced pregnancy loss or a newborn death. Sands also works in partnership with healthcare professionals to improve the quality of care and support for bereaved parents.

VALUES

Community. We create a safe environment for parents to grieve. We are bereaved parents, providing mutual support among ourselves and to those who are joining our unique community. No bereaved parent in Australia needs to feel they are alone.

Empathy. We understand. We recognise and respect the grief families feel about the death of their baby is natural, is life-long, but changes over time. This is a deep and real loss and it is legitimate to mourn.

Hope-focused. Despite grief and loss that can be overwhelming and life-altering in its pain and difficulty, we always maintain hope for the future.

Credibility. Health professionals can be confident in recommending us as their first choice for bereavement support and services, as they understand how Sands services contribute to high quality care for bereaved parents.

Diversity. We value the diversity of our community with regard to culture, religion, class, gender, sexuality and the uniqueness of each parent's grief.



CASE STUDY

A mother tells her story after recently attending a Sands Local Group in WA

It was Friday 28th March 2008, I was 22 weeks and 6 days pregnant with my 2nd child. I woke that morning with a bit of pain in my abdomen. On arrival at the hospital I was rushed straight up to maternity and into a labour ward. The midwife checked for the baby's heartbeat – all was good. I was waiting for them to give me something to stop the contractions. I was then told I was fully dilated and was going to have this baby now!

Next, there was someone beside me explaining that my baby was too early and would most likely not survive coming through the birth canal and that they do not intervene in births of babies before 24 weeks.

At 11.30am on Friday 28th March my 2nd daughter was born sleeping. She was a tiny 470gms. We named her Iris.

I don't know where the time went during that day. We spent time with our daughter. We gave permission for an autopsy and I had bloods taken, but we have no answers. I could not get my head around what had just happened. We were given pamphlets on counselling and told they would contact us when Iris's ashes were ready to be collected.

Some time passed. I went on to have another baby, the following year, a boy this time. My marriage had not been good for years and eventually, I left in 2011.

The kids and I moved into our new house and life started getting some normality. Then all of a sudden I would find myself filled with pain, crying uncontrollably for my angel baby. I could not explain where this was coming from. It wasn't an anniversary. It seemed so out of the blue.

It was then that I heard about Sands. I made contact and went to my first support meeting shortly after. I was so surprised to find that when I got there I couldn't talk. My throat tightened up and I was unable to tell my story. I had never had a problem with talking about my experience, but now, after all these years, I struggled. Yet at the same time I felt relief, sadness, and comfort – such range of emotions. I slept very heavily that night.

It has now occurred to me how much guilt I have about some of the decisions I made during that time because I didn't want the make it 'a big deal'. It WAS a big deal! My baby daughter died.

Thank you Sands, I'm not sure where I would be without your support.

Bree Waters from Western Australia, attended her Local Support Group in 2014.

Sands Strategic Vision 2015 – 2020

OUR VISION

Sands is the voice for bereaved parents and their families across Australia, promoting healthy grieving and bringing understanding and hope when a baby dies.

Our Impact

We provide hope and understanding following the death of a baby.

We increase access to quality support and information to all bereaved parents across Australia.

We improve the quality of care and support bereaved parents receive from professionals.

We create greater understanding and awareness among the community, employers & government.

Our strategic aims

We deliver accessible support services to all bereaved parents.

We deliver fit for purpose information services to all bereaved parents.

We deliver relevant education services to all professionals.

We inform public opinion of the devastating grief from the death of a baby.

We develop and grow our income streams to deliver our aspirations.

We build a truly national organisation for all bereaved parents.

Strategic Aim 1

We will deliver high quality and consistent support services that provide bereaved parents and their families a safe and confidential space to talk about their grief.

In the next five years, we will:

- Develop a consistent approach to our national, regional and local service delivery by developing clear and concise service principles, policies and procedures.
- Grow and expand the capacity of our current services to offer our support to all bereaved parents across every part of Australia.
- Develop and launch targeted services for bereaved parents from cultural and linguistic communities (CALD), indigenous and other cultural backgrounds.
- Improve our volunteering offer by developing a comprehensive recruitment, selection and training model.
- Enhance our monitoring and evaluations processed to ensure we can accurately evaluate our impact as well as continuously strive to improve our offer to bereaved parents.

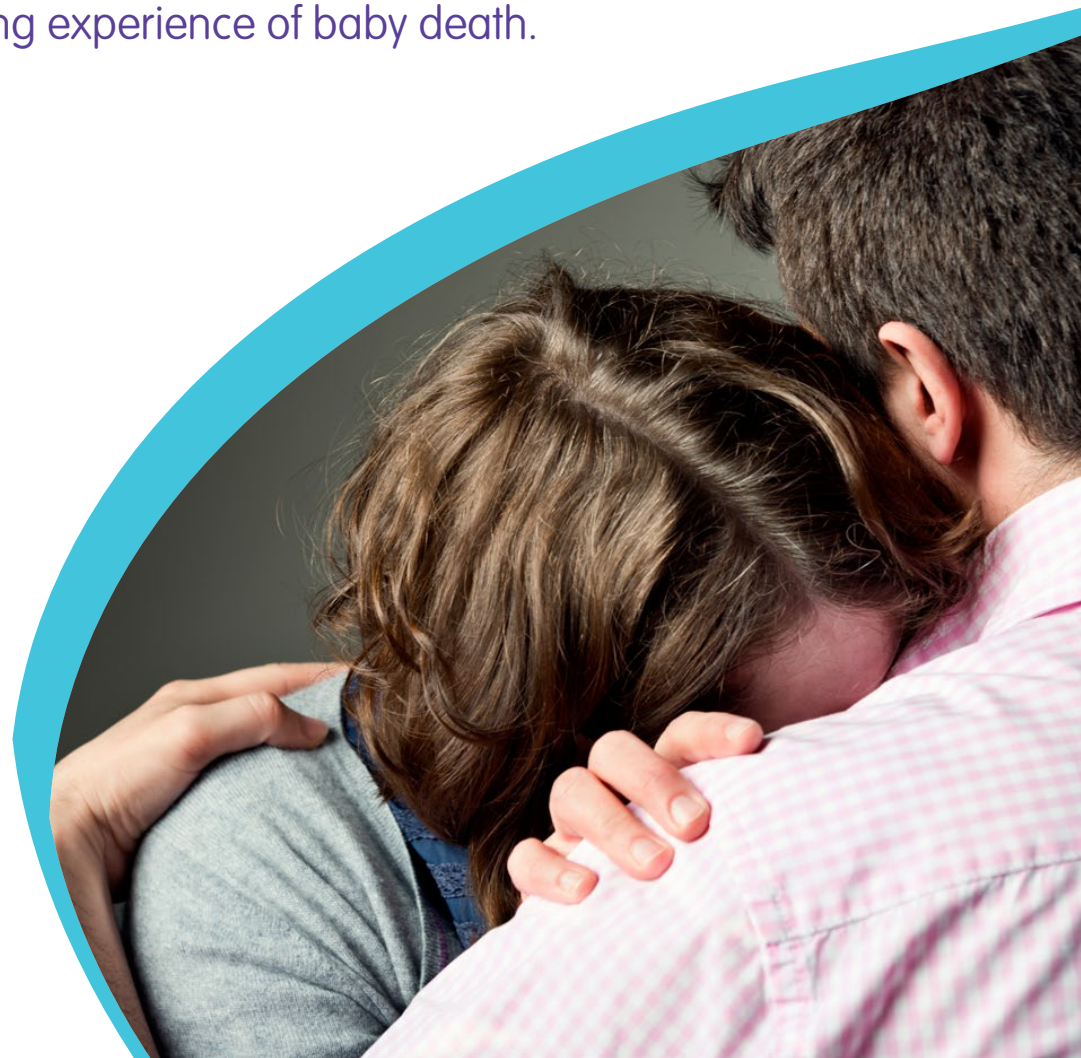


Strategic Aim 2

We will develop and provide accessible information services that guide bereaved parents and their families through the devastating experience of baby death.

In the next five years, we will:

- Review and develop a new suite of brochures to provide important information and facts on all aspects of pregnancy and infant loss.
- Distribute a total of 200,000 brochures per year by 2020 directly to hospitals, community settings, healthcare professionals and bereaved parents.
- Develop an online space and other innovative formats (online and offline) that provides clear and accessible information on all aspect of pregnancy or infant loss.
- Commission research on the impact of peer to peer support so that Sands can lead the way in developing our information and support services.



Strategic Aim 3

We will improve how bereaved parents and their families are supported and cared for by providing quality support, information and education to healthcare and funeral services professionals.

In the next five years, we will:

- Develop and launch new national guidelines for healthcare professionals which set out basic principles of care following the death of a baby.
- Develop and distribute our new Sands Support Packages to all Australian hospitals to ensure bereaved parents receive access to appropriate information and support following the death of a baby.
- Establish and maintain strategic relationships with key healthcare and funeral services bodies and colleges.
- Develop and launch our national training programme for healthcare professionals to enhance the practical knowledge and skills of providing effective care and support to all bereaved parents.
- Establish a national conference to bring together the healthcare and funeral services professionals every two years. The conference will focus on improving care and support of bereaved parents across Australia.



Strategic Aim 4

We will influence and inform public opinion and raise awareness of the issues and feelings surrounding the death of a baby so that bereaved parents feel better placed to talk about their experiences.

In the next five years, we will:

- Enhance our online presence and engage with over 270,000 supporters by 2020 through our social media platforms and our website.
- Deliver a national awareness campaign every two years which aims to break the silence around pregnancy and infant loss and starts a cultural shifts towards greater public awareness and understanding.
- Recruit and develop a group of Volunteer Ambassadors to spread the Sands word and information at local level.
- Develop and hold a national memorial and awareness day which provides an opportunity for bereaved parents to recognise the death of their baby across the country.
- Be more visible in the local community by providing leaflets and posters of our services in local community settings such as GP's, libraries, etc.



Strategic Aim 5

We will establish, diversify and grow our income streams to support the delivery of our mission and vision.

In the next five years, we will:

- Develop and grow our fundraising programme through individual donors, regular givers, community fundraisers, major donors, bequests, corporate donations and trusts.
- Achieve financial independency from any one single funding source, meaning greater stability and security for Sands.
- We will raise a total of \$3m during the 2020 financial year.



Strategic Aim 6

We will build a truly national organisation with appropriate infrastructure which allows us to establish a presence in all states and territories and reach out to all bereaved parents across Australia.

In the next five years, we will:

- Improve our organisation governance and structure to ensure greater efficiency and value for money.
- Establish a physical Sands presence across every state and territory.
- Develop strategic relationships and partnerships with similar organisations to ensure greater collaboration and avoid duplication of effort.



Sands Australia

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Volunteer parent supporters are on call 24/7

Online support

Visit www.sands.org.au to access our LiveChat service or email support@sands.org.au

