



# FFMPU

DECEMBER 2011

## E-Newsletter

Welcome to the December 2011 edition of the Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit e-news bulletin. As holidays and Christmas approach, the team at FFMPU sends best wishes to families and friends and others who work in the area of missing.

On 16 December, families and friends, Interagency members and the FFMPU team met for a social event in Parramatta. The event was an opportunity for families to meet informally. Some who attended wrote messages to other families...

*"Our hope and Christmas wish is for families and friends of missing persons, who feel our pain, have peace and avail themselves of the comfort and ongoing support of the group."*

*"I send my wishes for a Merry Christmas. One loved one will be missing from family festivities. I hope next year will be better. We need to remain hopeful and keep our spirits up."*

*"Best wishes and keep on hoping."*

*"I always find attending functions organised by FFMPU helpful. Meeting up with people in similar situations helps me feel I am not alone and have support. I would say to others who have a missing loved one to not give up hope and try to stay positive as hard as that may be to do. Don't be afraid to ask for help whenever you feel you need to and think about attending activities organised by FFMPU."*



Every message contains the word 'hope'. Families very often speak of hope and what it means for them. Hope is all of these things- *hope for families and friends to have peace, hope next year will be better, keep on hoping and not give up hope and try to stay positive.*

### FFMPU INFORMATION/GROUP MEETINGS

In 2011, FFMPU hosted or co-hosted a number of family events, which have included the Family Forum and the service to mark the start of National Missing Persons Week.

In addition to these larger meetings there have been five group work meetings in Parramatta, two in Queanbeyan, one in Corrimal (near Wollongong) and one in Newcastle. Thank you to all who have provided valuable feedback. This feedback will enable us to continue to tailor our delivery to meet the needs of families and friends.

In 2012 we hope to expand the programme to better meet the needs of families unable to travel to Sydney. If families reading this newsletter have any suggestions for possible locations please talk to one of the team.

## A CHURCH SERVICE FOR FAMILIES

A special gathering for families and friends of missing persons was held on 13 November at Brighton-Kogarah Uniting Church. Everyone was made welcome and after sharing words of hope and encouragement and a time for reflection, everyone present shared afternoon tea. Families and friends of missing people who attended expressed appreciation at the opportunity to meet other families in a similar situation.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND INSERVICE

2011 has been a busy year for the FFMPU team. FFMPU continues to work with the community and service providers to develop a coordinated approach to supporting families and friends of missing persons. One of the ways FFMPU is working to achieve this is by educating others about the work of the Unit, providing training and inservice to law enforcement and non-law enforcement search agencies; and stakeholders working in the missing persons sector:

In 2011, the FFMPU team has presented to service providers in a variety of settings, including Victims Services, Office of the DPP and Health. Health venues have included RPA Hospital, Westmead Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital. Regular presentations have continued at the Police Training College, Goulburn and other venues including the Police Consultative Group on Missing Persons, Victims of Crime Assistance League (VOCAL), Mission Australia, Lifeline, Rotary and University of NSW.

## NEW RESOURCE BOOK

The team is continuing to work on a resource for individuals impacted by the loss of a missing person. The resource book aims to increase community understanding and provide information on a range of topics relevant to families experiencing the loss of a missing person.

We would like to thank the families who have agreed to be interviewed. Your generosity and willingness to share your insights and experiences is very much appreciated.

We hope the book will be completed and published in early 2012. We will be sure to let families know when it is ready for distribution.

## FAREWELL TO SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Katie Calabrese and Anita Kajic, 4th year social work students from the University of New South Wales, finished their 79-day placement with FFMPU in November. The end of their placement also marks the end of their university studies. They graduate early next year.

Katie and Anita reviewed and revised the FFMPU database to better reflect the work being completed in the Unit.

They also prepared a report entitled *The Short-term Missing Project* about families and friends who have had contact with FFMPU for a shorter period because their missing person is located or returns home. The report highlighted the vital importance of a timely response and for families and friends to feel their requests are taken seriously by all service providers.

Please contact one of the team at FFMPU if you would like further information.

Katie and Anita assisted the Counsellor/Group Worker, Emmanuel Kassiotis, at regional group meetings in Queanbeyan and Corrimal.

Best wishes to Katie and Anita from the team at FFMPU and all at Victims Services.



## PUBLICATIONS

FFMPU has produced a new brochure on its support and counselling service and ways that counselling may help.

**How counselling can help** is available on the FFMPU website

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/missingpersons](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/missingpersons) or you can call 1800 227 772 or (02) 8688 8173 for a copy.



## CONFERENCE IN 2012

The FFMPU is working with an enthusiastic group of people who work in the missing persons sector planning the first conference in Australia since 1995. It will be held in July 2012.

Entitled **Missing People: Issues and Implications Conference**, this 2-day conference brings together and builds connections across the groups of people, organisations and agencies concerned about missing people and the implications for families, communities and organisations when someone is missing.

**Who:** The conference will be attended by police and law enforcement services, family members and friends of missing people, health and mental health professionals, counselling and support service professionals, education and training sectors across government and non-government agencies. The conference will aim to improve services, and to meet the challenges inherent in working collaboratively in the interests of missing people, their families, friends and communities.

Some key themes for the conference will include definitional and ethical issues; specific groups at risk; research; and policy and service delivery frameworks.

**Where:** Griffith University Logan Campus, University Drive, Meadowbrook, Queensland

**When:** Thursday 5 and Friday 6 July 2012.

**Further details:** Contact the Conference Secretariat to register your interest now!

**Phone:** 07) 3893 1988 • **Fax:** 07) 3337 9855 • **Email:** [info@e-kiddna.com.au](mailto:info@e-kiddna.com.au) • **Address:** PO Box 1144, Wynnum QLD 4178



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(FMP • 12/2011)

### CONTACT DETAILS

For further information about this material or other topics, please call us on:

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