

MEDIA RELEASE – NOVEMBER 30, 2023

### **First-of-its-kind national forum for LGBTQIA+ people navigating suicide bereavement**

LGBTQIA+ people bereaved by suicide have a new space to find support and connection in SASH – a national online forum and resource hub developed for and by LGBTQIA+ people bereaved by suicide launching on 5 December by Jesuit Social Services' Support After Suicide program.

SASH was developed after Support After Suicide and LGBTQIA+ mental health organisation Switchboard Victoria identified a need for more specialist support spaces for LGBTQIA+ communities.

“We recognised the opportunity to develop an online support forum for the LGBTQIA+ community through our collaboration with Switchboard Victoria, which started in 2019 as part of broadcaster JOY 94.9's *Let's Talk about Suicide* podcast. There are very few services for LGBTQIA+ people bereaved by suicide,” says Dr Flynn.

SASH – Support After Suicide Hub – is a project of Support After Suicide, which for nearly 20 years has provided counselling, peer support and postvention coordination for those bereaved by suicide in Victoria. Now, SASH offers LGBTQIA+ people bereaved by suicide to bridge social and geographic isolation to share experiences, offer and receive support, and access resources.

“When I was bereaved by suicide, I was not just grieving the loss of a friend but grieving for all LGBTQIA+ people who face a transphobic and homophobic world each day,” says Immy Money, LGBTQIA+ peer supporter and SASH Project Officer.

“I was grieving for how this treatment correlates with suicide's disproportionate impact on our communities, and now understanding this tangibly, I was realising just how many in our community are suicide bereaved. I needed people who understood that to support me.”

Every step of SASH's development was guided by a lived experience advisory group in collaboration with Switchboard Victoria, to ensure the platform is an informed, welcoming space for people to connect and exchange support.

“We've been honoured to work closely with Switchboard Victoria to facilitate tailored peer support groups run by and for LGBTQIA+ people bereaved by suicide. We know peer support and a sense of connection are vital in enabling people to navigate the intensity and complexity of their bereavement, and SASH is the next step in this specialised and practical support,” says Dr Flynn.

Switchboard Victoria's CEO Joe Ball, Victorian Commissioner for LGBTQIA+ Communities Dr Todd Fernando, Dr Alex Hains, Acting Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Office, and Dr Flynn will speak at the online launch.

SASH is funded by the Federal Government through the National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program and can be accessed after launch at [sash.org.au](https://sash.org.au).

For more information about Support After Suicide, visit [www.supportaftersuicide.org.au](https://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au). To speak to an LGBTQIA+ peer supporter call Qlife on 1800 184 527. For crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

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