



Families Guide – A Resource for families of Victoria Police Employees

The Emergency Services Foundation is delighted that Victoria Police have tailored ESF's ['Families Guide – a Resource for Families of Emergency Service Workers'](#) and made it available for all VicPol members through the ESF website, and across the Victoria Police intranet and Wellbeing Services.

Senior Sergeant Greg Dean, who was instrumental in making this happen said, “One thing I have always been really passionate about is the importance of educating the families and loved ones of all emergency service workers around the signs and symptoms of a decline in their mental health, the support options available to both the worker and their families and how they can initiate a conversation if they have concerns.”

Whilst working in Welfare Services in 2016, Greg realised there was still a lot of work that could be done to assist members and their families. He said, “The Mental Health Review had just been released, and I could see there were areas where we could definitely make improvements.”

Greg realised the often-unsung role families play in identifying, and helping combat mental health issues among Victoria Police members.

“Victoria Police has done a lot of work around asking the right questions and trying to normalise mental health conversations in our workplaces, but sometimes the people who first notice something is not quite right, is those who we live with, or spend time with outside of the workplace. This guide is to assist families identify the potential signs and symptoms or to start those conversations as soon as they recognise changes in behaviour or know the person could be going through a tough time.”

Aside from informing families about how they can help their loved one, the guide also provides support for family member's own mental health.

"Families, including children, can also be affected by the job, so the guide includes information on how they can manage their own mental health and wellbeing and how to access the support available for both members and those closest to them."

The guide is an important element of ESFs Family Matters Strategy.

ESF CEO Siusan MacKenzie said, "Families told us that they wanted a resource like this because they can be the first line of defence in recognising change in the mental health of their emergency service worker.

We are delighted that Victoria Police has chosen to tailor this guide for the families of its members. I hope it benefits many people," she said.

Furthermore, the guide, and the [Family Matters](#) research more generally, is seeing far-reaching benefits. Western Australia police are looking at using the Families Guide, and ESF recently became aware that its leading families work is being used in supporting emergency service workers in Ireland through their Hugs@Home program.

Responses from Victoria Police Members:

'Such great work by you to get the Family Guide up and running for the betterment of our people. You should, again, be very proud of your achievements. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our mental health.'

'Just read your book – Families Guide. I wished this was around years ago when I went through a whole heap of issues which, eventually lead to a divorce. Something like this may have helped.'

'What a great document you have created here. I think has hit the mark as well.'

'Just wanted to say "well done" I read the Families Guide just now. I will keep it handy for my members, easy to read/understand and informative.'

'So good to see this!'

'That's excellent. Some really good information and strategies which can be used for co-workers not just families.'

[Read the guide here](#)