

Information Sheet for Health Professionals

Annual Commemoration Day Service

Thursday 14 October 2010, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

Winthrop Hall, University of Western Australia, Crawley

What is the Annual Commemoration Day Service?

The Annual Commemoration Day Service is a secular ceremony which commemorates those who have recently died in Western Australia. It is organised by Palliative Care WA Inc for the entire community.

Palliative Care WA Inc has clear health-promoting objectives for the Annual Commemoration Day Service: to assist with building the Western Australian community's capacity (and to support people in their own endeavours) to cope with loss, grief and bereavement.

Specifically, we aim to:

- provide fellowship through a ceremony, the provision of refreshments and an opportunity for people to meet informally
- incorporate, where-ever possible, evidence-based practice to support people coping with loss, grief and bereavement and develop community capacity in these areas
- acknowledge and use elements from a range of traditions which help people cope with loss, grief and bereavement
- acknowledge the history of the St Luke's Day Service in Perth.

Who can come to the Annual Commemoration Day Service?

All Western Australians who have experienced the loss of someone close to them in the past year or so are welcome to attend the Service. Health professionals who provide care to people at the end of life are also welcome.

Although the event is organised by Palliative Care WA Inc, palliative care will not be the sole focus of the Service. We recognise that many people do not access or need input from a palliative care service when they are dying, while others die unexpectedly, and that those close to these people might benefit from participation in the Annual Commemoration Day Service.

There is no need to RSVP for this event, attendees should simply turn up on the evening. There is no charge or cost.

What will happen on the evening?

The doors of Winthrop Hall will be open from 6:30. The event will commence at 7:00 PM.

There will be several speakers, some of whom will give short talks (no longer than five minutes each), while others will read carefully selected texts which relate to loss and grief. People from a range of backgrounds (including people from the general community who have recent experience of loss and grief) will share their personal thoughts, insights and understandings. A choir will perform at different stages.

Members of the audience will be invited to light a candle to commemorate someone close to them. The candles will be provided.

After the formal ceremony finishes at about 8:15 PM, all participants will be invited to a simple supper of tea or coffee and biscuits.

All participants will be provided with a program.

What role will health professionals play?

Members of the caring professions in the audience will be invited to stand for a moment and repeat, together, a brief statement (which will be printed in the Program provided on the night) so that their contribution to our community can be acknowledged by those present.

There is no requirement for you to stand if you do not want to: whether you stand or not is entirely up to you. There is no need for you to sit in any particular part of Winthrop Hall for the Service.

This draws upon a traditional part of the St Luke's Day Service (see below), in which palliative care workers stood briefly to identify themselves and signify their commitment to providing care and support at the end of life for their clients.

Why choose 14 October 2010?

14 October falls between World Hospice and Palliative Care Day (9 October 2010) and St Luke's Day (18 October each year). St Luke is the patron saint of physicians.

The annual St Luke's Day Service was held in Perth for the family members and friends of people who had died in palliative care during the previous year.