



Commemorating Perinatal Loss



Case for Funding 2024





WHO WE ARE

Possum Portraits is a registered health promotion charity, providing grief support services to bereaved parents after pregnancy and baby loss.

Founded in 2021, we support grieving families in the crucial acts of remembrance & commemoration by hand-drawing keepsake portraits of so-called "angel babies" free of charge. Our service is unique in Australia.

In our affluent, resourceful nation, over 110,000 families still suffer perinatal bereavement each year.

What is more, this statistic has not improved in over two decades.*

Every day in Australia,

- **6 babies are stillborn,**
- **2 babies die as neonates**
- **and a miscarriage occurs every 3,5 minutes.**

Our mission is to validate parents' grief journeys and honour the existence of their baby's fleeting but impactful life. This simple acknowledgement helps improve health outcomes after loss.

In 13 months we have completed almost 100 portraits for parents nationwide.

THE EFFECTS OF BABY LOSS MAY INCLUDE:



Diagnoses of various Anxiety Disorders and Clinical Depression



Feelings of shame, guilt & isolation stemming from a persistent social stigma



Diagnoses of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



A 5-fold increase in the risk of suicide for both mothers and fathers



Poorer mental, socio-emotional & physical health outcomes



Loss of income due to prolonged suffering, delaying the return to work



CURRENT PROJECTS

We would like to introduce three projects to you as contenders for receiving a donation through your fund.

On the following pages, we will go into greater detail about each. Briefly, the case for funding that distinguishes each project is as follows:

1

MEMORIAL KEEPSAKE PORTRAITS

Case for Funding

Memory-making is known to have a positive effect on wellbeing after loss. Keepsakes validate emotions and support the continued bond between parent and baby: a bond which persists emotionally, and needs to find expression to permit healing of trauma.

2

CHILDREN'S BOOK ON GRIEF & LOSS

Case for Funding

The loss of a baby is also traumatic for siblings. We are developing a psychotherapeutic picture book on pregnancy and baby loss called "The House in Ollie's Tummy". It will help parents with existing children at the time of loss broach the topic and explain facts.

3

HEALTHCARE RESEARCH STUDY

Case for Funding

Joint research in collaboration with confirmed partner Monash University seeks to establish memorial portraiture as a new bereavement care offering able to improve mental health outcomes after baby loss. Government funding of our service could follow publication.



PROJECT 1: KEEPSAKE PORTRAITS

Bereavement keepsakes are known to have a positive effect on wellbeing and mental health after perinatal loss (Blood & Cacciatore, 2014).

Our memorial portraits support parents on their healing journey. Here are some of the benefits our portraits provide for grieving families:



Support on the Grief Journey

Research shows mementos are helpful for processing grief and that they provide crucial emotional support.



Helpful for young siblings

Photos can be graphic & may be confronting. Drawings tend to be much softer and more relatable images for children.



To soften congenital anomalies

A drawing can visually attenuate birth defects and any injuries a baby may have sustained during the process of labour.



As a commemorative gift

A drawing is a thoughtful birth or death anniversary gift. It shows parents that their child has not been forgotten.



Chance for a family portrait

If parents have no pictures of themselves and their baby, a drawing can combine various photographs in one portrait.



Salvaging faded photographs

Fading angel baby photos, taken with polaroids years or decades ago, get a new lease of life.



Remove medical equipment

A drawing can leave out medical and life support devices including tubes, wires, machines, tape and more.



Chance for a sibling portrait

Parents who suffer recurrent losses can feature babies from separate pregnancies together in one portrait.

“

My Possum Portrait is something I can do to cherish Arnaud's life - his 4 day old life.

It is something I will take to his resting place and show him, how wonderful he was.

”

- Audrey, Arnaud's mum



\$10,000
WILL PROVIDE



memorial keepsake portraits
for 80 bereaved parents
throughout Australia

\$5,000
WILL PROVIDE



memorial keepsake portraits
for 40 bereaved parents in
your state or territory

\$3,000
WILL PROVIDE



memorial keepsake portraits
for 24 bereaved parents in
your city or state



PROJECT 2: CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK

The aim of our picture book "The House in Ollie's Tummy" is to support parents to navigate conversations on death & grief with their living children.

Crucially, our book contains childhood grief tips & resources for parents, written by grief counsellor and certified Child Life Specialist Dr. Korie Leigh.

Coping with baby loss is difficult enough. Being a parent to living child(ren) while steeped in the throes of grief is a situation no parent should have to navigate without support.

Our book will help families identify and name new and confusing feelings, talk about what occurred in age-appropriate language and give parents insight and resources for supporting their child through grief.

Distributed via maternity hospitals and public libraries, parents will return home from hospital with a resource in hand that is able to support them and their living children from the very first hours and days after loss. Open conversations help reduce the likelihood of bereavement trauma and adverse developmental outcomes occurring in children later on.

“Bereavement means learning to live with a powerful range of confusing and conflicting emotions. Bottled up, these emotions can have damaging consequences in later life for the individual, their family and society.”

- Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre, UK

\$10,000
WILL PROVIDE



1,000 free copies of "The House in Ollie's Tummy" for maternity hospitals & libraries

\$5,000
WILL PROVIDE



500 take-home copies of "The House in Ollie's Tummy" for bereaved Aussie families

\$3,000
WILL PROVIDE



300 copies of "The House in Ollie's Tummy" for care providers in your state



PROJECT 3: HEALTHCARE RESEARCH

Anecdotal evidence in the shape of parent feedback and testimonials suggests that our memorial portraiture service is a promising new bereavement care offering in the Australian healthcare context.

Our study aims to corroborate that memorial portraits can improve health outcomes after loss and so attract (government) funding.

“

I will cherish this for my entire lifetime. I don't have the words to express what this picture means to me.

”

- Catherine, Louis's mum

“

I received my drawing in the mail the other day and it's more beautiful than I ever imagined it would be. It's so special to have a picture of Elijah that I can look at.

”

- Natasha, Elijah's mum

Lead researchers Dr. Levita D'Souza and Dr. Zoe Morris are finalising a study design looking at the effects of our memorial keepsake portraits on grief outcomes in mothers after perinatal bereavement.

To guard against conflicts of interest, ethical best practice in academic research strongly discourages the service being evaluated from funding investigations into its effectiveness.

We are seeking independent funding for a study led by Monash University, whose aim is to investigate memorial portraiture as a new bereavement care instrument potentially able to deliver clinically recognisable and improved health outcomes after perinatal loss.

**\$10,000
WILL PROVIDE**



financing to conduct a joint research study with Monash University

**\$5,000
WILL PROVIDE**



open access publication of our study in a reputable, peer-reviewed academic journal

**\$3,000
WILL PROVIDE**



85 hours of data evaluation & analysis conducted by a qualified research assistant

“ Thank you for your really stupendous work. To see Karl and Edda together like this is a very special moment.

I am glad you exist and glad you offer such creative grief support for bereaved mothers and fathers. Thank you!

”

- Thorsten, Karl & Edda's dad



THEORY OF CHANGE

By donating to Possum Portraits, you will improve the lives of bereaved Australian families living with baby loss.

Whether through investing in research, providing parents with bespoke bereavement keepsakes or by making grief support resources for families more easily and widely available: your contribution will result in positive change.

We are happy to facilitate allocation of your donation across our multiple projects if you wish.

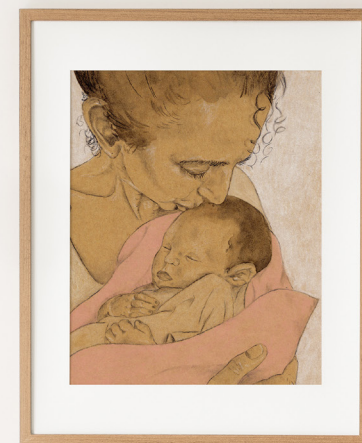
“ When I received my Possum Portrait after all this time, it literally took my breath away! It's gentle, subtle, beautiful, and somehow less confronting than a photo. I have let go of so much heartache, so much trauma. I feel complete.

”

- Dianne, bereaved of her stillborn daughter Rebecca in May 1990

Possum Portraits is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR1) charity.

This makes your donation to us tax deductible.



OUR NETWORK

On this page you will see some of our project and referral partners, corporate donors and media collaborators. We look forward to working with you in the future and delivering joint projects. Let's improve health outcomes for parents following pregnancy and baby loss together.

CORPORATE DONORS



TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS



IN THE MEDIA



REFERRAL PARTNERS



PROJECT PARTNERS



MONASH University



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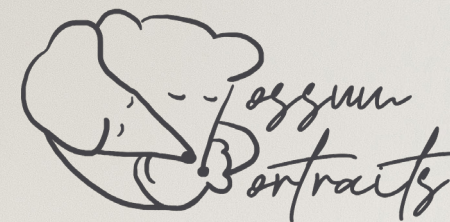
Website

www.possumportraits.org

ABN 25 327 978 344

Donations

Bank	Bendigo Bank
Account	185 758 752
BSB	633 000
Name	Possum Portraits Inc



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