

Listen in: Grief and loss – disaster recovery

PANEL BIOS

Brenda Baker



Brenda has lived and worked in the rural sector all her life, growing up on her family farm just outside the small town of Junee in NSW's Riverina region. Brenda studied Nursing at Wagga University and was chosen to participate in an Agricultural Exchange program in Canada, giving her the opportunity to immerse herself in small farming communities and experience Canadian rural life. This led to a lifelong passion for Brenda, living, engaging and thriving in small rural communities.

In 1989, Brenda and her extended family moved to Coonabarabran, beside the mighty Warrumbungles mountain range, to start a new enterprise for their growing families. Brenda nursed in the small town of Baradine for ten years and learnt first-hand the struggles and joys of living in rural Australia. "Coona" has been the ideal place for Brenda and her husband to raise three beautiful children, all of which have now flown the coup to make new adventures of their own. Brenda has continued her studies in Counselling and is a Volunteer for Lifeline as a Crisis Support Worker.

As National Association for Loss and Grief's 'Our Shout' Program Coordinator, supporting rural NSW communities, Brenda brings warmth and knowledge to the position, and a profound level of empathy for those making a living in rural Australia. Her role involves helping communities to hold events and gatherings that are meaningful for them, whilst encouraging positive strategies to enhance wellbeing and resilience throughout rural and regional NSW.

Listen in: Grief and loss – disaster recovery

Julie Dunsmore AM, MAPS



Julie is a psychologist and the current President of the National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG) (NSW) Inc. Julie has had a special interest in working with bereaved parents, adolescents and children over many years. Julie is a founding member of CanTeen (Australian Teenage Cancer Patients' Society Inc.) She is a co-founder of SANDS (NSW) (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support Group). She has worked extensively with those who have experienced traumatic bereavement after a violent / sudden unexpected death, including suicide, murder and accidents.

Since 2003 Julie has been the Bali Trauma Recovery Coordinator (NSW Health) primarily working with NSW Bali Bombing survivors, bereaved and first responders. She has worked with survivors of the Tsunami and has been a consultant for those working with the bereaved from NSW and Victorian bushfires, and Queensland floods. Julie is a member of numerous International/Federal/State, expert Advisory/Working Groups on Disaster Management in relation to mental, emotional social health response and supporting victims of terrorism. She has been instrumental in developing emotional social health programs and advocating for resilience building initiatives in communities experiencing adversity.