

## Germanwings Flight 4U9525 Tragedy Claims Life of VAC Volunteer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 MARCH 2015 - Early this morning Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop confirmed that two Victorians, a mother and her adult son, were on board the Germanwings Flight 4U9525 that crashed in the Southern Alps en route from Barcelona to Dusseldorf in the early hours of the morning. Longstanding VAC volunteer Greig Friday has now been identified as one of the two Australians lost in this tragedy. Greig had been featured in a previous VAC Health Promotion campaign in 2010 and worked as a volunteer facilitator in VAC's *Young & Gay* Peer Education program for the past several years.

Greig started volunteering for VAC in 2007 after completing the *Young & Gay* Peer Education Workshop. Greig was instrumental in the success of *Young & Gay*, providing assistance and guidance to many young people to overcome homophobia and celebrate their sexual identity. Greig also played a key role in the establishment of *Young & Gay Alumni*, a social support group for participants to remain connected to the community after the workshop. *Young & Gay* was recently recognised at Melbourne's inaugural GLOBE awards in October 2014 recognising significant contributions to the LGBTIQ community.

VAC Peer Education Coordinator Budi Sudarto worked closely with Greig. "We will miss Greig's witty personality and his sense of humour. Greig always put others first, and this is evident in his on-going dedication to both *Young & Gay* and the Peer Education Program," he said. "We will remember Greig, and we want him to know that he left positive mark in the world and put smiles on others' faces as part of his legacy."

VAC President Greg Carter added, "We express our sincerest condolences to all those that lost loved ones in today's tragedy, but we're incredibly saddened that we've lost one of our dedicated volunteers. Our thoughts are with Greig's friends as well as his family, who have lost both Greig and his mother Carol."

"We're an organisation that has only ever been possible with the support of community members like Greig Friday," said VAC CEO Simon Ruth. "Today we honour Greig's contributions to VAC and the positive impact he has made on the lives of several young gay men in our community."

On a final note, VAC Director, Health Promotions, Policy & Communications, Colin Batrouney added, "Greig Friday was a highly valued volunteer with the Health Promotion Program. Like many young gay men, Greig had to find a way of coming to grips with his sexuality, learn about relationships, and come out in a society that is sometimes hostile to gay men. Greig did all this with grace and humility. He became a Peer Facilitator with our program, offering support, education and friendship to other gay men facing the same issues. His kindness and generosity of spirit will be sorely missed by all of us."

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