



Media Release
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Special garden pays tribute to children's lives at International Show

A unique display garden at the *Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show* (28 March - 1 April) will pay special tribute to children who have died of a serious illness and raise money for Very Special Kids.

The *Very Special Kids Remembering our Children Garden* is being especially designed by award-winning duo Vivid Design and Semken Landscaping and promises to be nothing short of an inspiring space to embrace the powerful memories of children.

With the names of over 200 *very special kids* to be engraved on river stones throughout the beautiful garden, the display will be a wonderful emotive addition to the Show, yet a stark reminder of the reality faced by hundreds of Victorian families when their child dies from an illness.

Victorian charity, Very Special Kids, works with more than 750 families caring for a child with a life-threatening illness to ensure they have all the support they need from the point of diagnosis through bereavement or to recovery. The families whose children will be remembered in the garden continue to access Very Special Kids Bereavement Support Program.

Very Special Kids relies substantially on the community's generosity to continue providing a range of support services free of charge to families. So while paying tribute to these children through a stunning garden display, Very Special Kids is putting a call out to the Victorian community to become a regular supporter and ensure these families always have the support they need.

CEO David Agnew said: "Very Special Kids needs regular supporters to fund its work so we can plan ahead and ease the journey for over 750 Victorian families, of whom approximately 260 are bereaved. We can't do it without your ongoing support."

The multi-level garden of deep and resonant colours will include a life-size sculpture of a small girl, a reflection pond and stone pathway with the sound of children's voices and giggles in the background. At the close of the event, families will receive the river stone with their child's name. *Very Special Kids Remembering our Children Garden*, located at stand B2 is a must for all visitors.

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Notes to editor

What: *Very Special Kids Remembering our Children Garden* - a special display garden at Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show to honour the lives of *very special* children who have died.

When: 28 March - 1 April **Where:** Carlton Gardens stand B2

More info: www.vsk.org.au, 03 9804 6222 or www.melbflowershow.com.au

More about *Very Special Kids Remembering our Children Garden*

The special tribute garden will celebrate the lives of over 200 *very special kids* while acknowledging and supporting those who love them.

Behind the idea, the design and implementation are leading horticultural and landscape industry members including Semken Landscaping, Vivid Design, Gardenworld and Tait Timber & Hardware. Very Special Kids would like to also thank the bereaved families from whom we have had an overwhelming response to be part of the garden. Each family will receive their memory stone at the end of the event.

More about Very Special Kids

Very Special Kids is a unique organisation that supports families throughout their experience of caring for children with life-threatening illnesses, from diagnosis through to recovery or bereavement.

Currently, Very Special Kids supports more than 750 families across Victoria providing counselling, respite and end-of-life care at *Very Special Kids' House* (Victoria's only children's hospice), sibling support and trained Family Support Volunteers.

Approximately 260 of these families access the Bereavement Support Program which consists of activities and services for siblings and parents, family support volunteers and an annual Remembrance Day.

"Very Special Kids has made a huge difference in our lives. The excellent care has helped us to cope with a very difficult period in our lives."

Karen, mother of Hannah (Hannah died in 2002, aged 5).

"It costs almost \$4 million per year to provide these services to families," said CEO, David Agnew. "Very Special Kids relies on the community to fund 80% of these costs. Through pledging a set amount each month, you will help us to continue to support these families when they need us the most."

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