

Your Grief Journey Starts Here

*Gentle guidance, support, and practical help
for the months ahead – from our family to yours.*



MCCARTNEY FAMILY FUNERALS

How This Booklet Can Support You

This booklet is not meant to be read all at once.

Grief unfolds over time, and different parts of this booklet may feel helpful at different moments. You may wish to read a little now, return to it later, or simply keep it close for when questions arise.

Inside, you'll find gentle guidance on:

- Understanding grief and what you may experience in the months ahead
- Navigating the first year after loss
- Practical matters that often arise following a death
- Support services available to you
- Thinking about the future, when and if you feel ready

There is no right place to begin, and no expectation to read every page.

Take what feels useful and leave the rest for another time.

A Message of Care and Continuity

If you are reading this, it likely means you have recently said goodbye to someone deeply important to you.

The days after a funeral can feel quiet, disorienting, and heavy. Support naturally begins to fade, routines return, and yet your world has changed in ways that may be difficult to put into words.

This booklet exists to gently guide you through what comes next, at your pace, in your time. There is no expectation to read this all at once. Take what you need, when you need it.

Caring for your family during such a deeply personal and vulnerable time is an honour we never take lightly. On behalf of everyone at McCartney Family Funerals, I would like to thank you for entrusting us with the care of your loved one. To be invited into a family's life at a time of loss is both a privilege and a responsibility, and it is one we approach with the utmost respect, compassion, and humility.

While the funeral may now be behind you, our care does not end here.

Grief continues long after the service, often quietly and unexpectedly. Please know that you remain very much in our thoughts, and that support is always available should you need it, now, or in the months ahead.

From our family to yours, we extend our heartfelt care and ongoing support.

Warm regards,

Bryan McCartney
Managing Director



Grief Has No Right or Wrong

Grief is not something that follows a set path or timetable. It does not move in neat stages, and it looks different for every person and every loss.

You may find that some days feel manageable, while others feel overwhelming without warning. You might experience deep sadness, anger, confusion, relief, guilt, or a sense of numbness. These feelings may come and go or exist together at the same time.

Grief can affect more than just emotions. It may show up physically through tiredness, changes in appetite or sleep, or a sense of heaviness. It can cloud concentration, make simple decisions feel difficult, and leave you feeling unlike yourself.

There is no “right” way to grieve, and there is no expectation to feel a certain way by a certain time.

What matters most is allowing yourself the space to experience your grief in whatever form it takes, without judgement, comparison, or pressure.

“Grief is personal. Your experience is valid.”

When Children Are Grieving

Children experience grief differently from adults. Their understanding of death, their ability to express emotions, and the way grief shows itself can change depending on their age, personality, and the support around them.

Many children grieve in bursts rather than continuously. They may move between sadness and play, questions and silence, distress and apparent normality, sometimes within the same day. This can be confusing or even unsettling for adults, but it is a natural way for children to process loss.

You may notice changes in behaviour rather than words. Increased clinginess, withdrawal, anger, regression, difficulty sleeping, or changes at school can all be ways children communicate what they are feeling when they do not yet have the language to explain it.

Honest, age-appropriate conversations can be helpful, even when you don't have all the answers. Using clear language, allowing questions to be asked more than once, and acknowledging emotions without trying to fix them can help children feel safe and supported.

It is also important to remember that children take cues from the adults around them. Seeing trusted adults express sadness, talk openly, and continue to function can reassure children that grief, while painful, is something that can be carried together.

There is no single “right” way to support a grieving child. What matters most is presence, patience, and reassurance that they are loved, safe, and not alone.

If you are concerned about how a child is coping, or if grief feels overwhelming for them or for you, additional support is available. Reaching out for guidance is not a sign of failure, it is a way of caring well for the whole family.

What Many People Don't Expect About Grief

For many people, the days immediately after a loss are filled with activity, visitors, and support. When that busyness fades and life begins to move forward, grief can feel as though it has arrived more fully.

You may find that your grief deepens weeks or months after the funeral. This does not mean you are going backwards; it is a natural response as the reality of your loss settles in.

There may be moments of laughter or relief that are followed by guilt. You might feel angry without knowing why or find yourself emotionally numb when you expect to feel something. Some people describe feeling isolated, even while surrounded by others.

These experiences are common yet rarely spoken about.

Grief does not follow a straight line. It comes in waves, and it can change in intensity and form over time. When these changes happen, it can help to know that they are a normal part of learning how to live alongside loss.

Beyond Goodbye

For us, care does not end when the funeral does.

Beyond Goodbye is our way of continuing to support families after the service, through the quieter weeks and months when grief is often felt most deeply.

There is no schedule to follow, no expectation to engage, and no right way to need support. Some families find comfort in a gentle check-in. Others appreciate access to resources, guidance, or simply knowing that someone remembers and cares.

Grief can change over time, and so can the kind of support that feels helpful. Beyond Goodbye exists to meet you where you are, whenever you need it.

You are never expected to reach out, but you are always welcome to.

What Continued Care Can Look Like

Grief is not something that ends when a service is over. It continues in quiet moments, in unexpected waves, and often long after others have returned to their everyday lives.

For some families, continued care may mean a gentle check-in at a time when grief feels heavier. For others, it may simply be knowing that support is available if it is needed. There is no right way to engage, and no expectation to do so.

Support can take many forms; access to helpful resources, guidance through practical matters, or reassurance during significant dates and milestones. What feels helpful may change over time, and that is entirely natural.

Above all, continued care is about respect, remembrance, and walking beside you as you find your way forward.

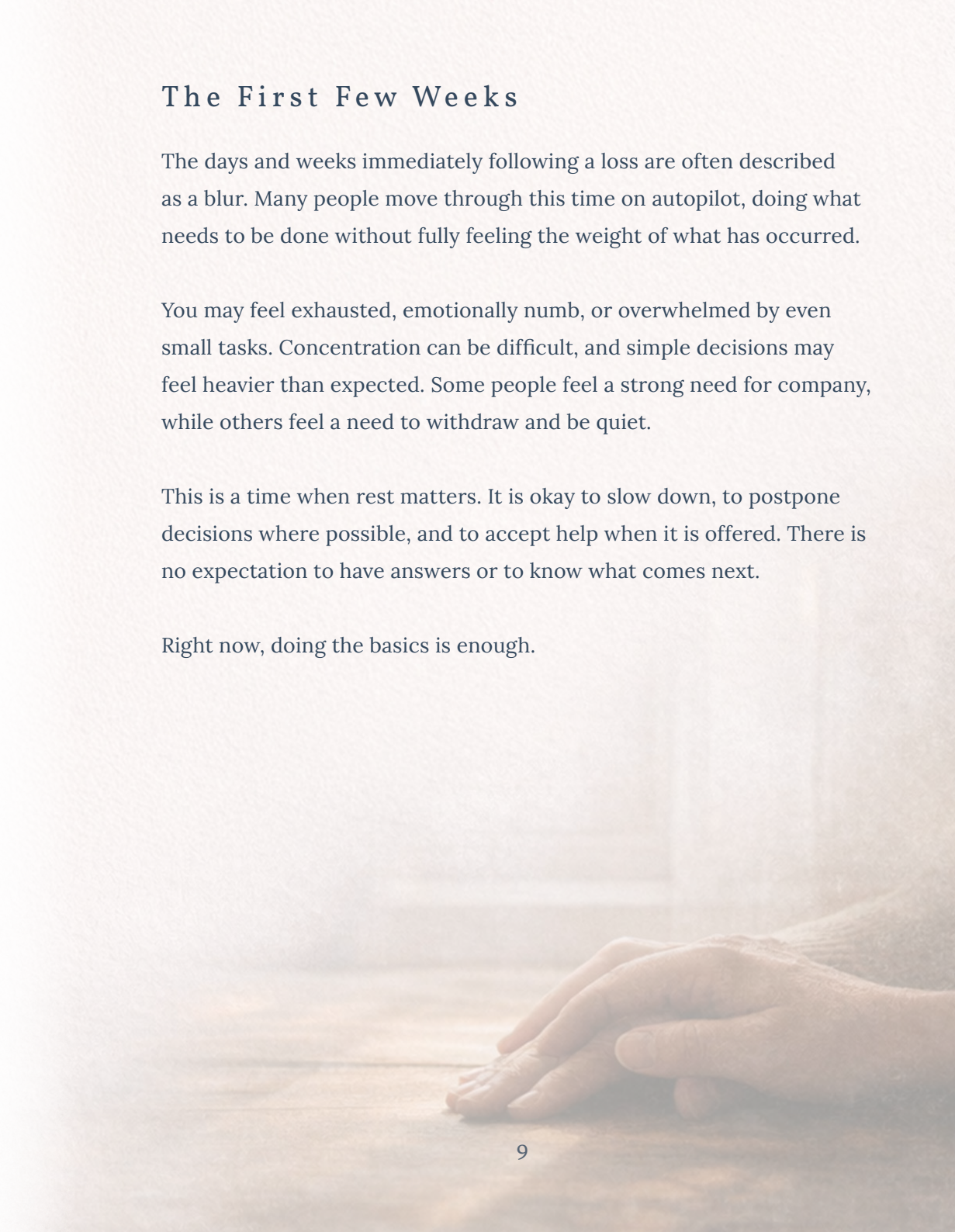
The First Few Weeks

The days and weeks immediately following a loss are often described as a blur. Many people move through this time on autopilot, doing what needs to be done without fully feeling the weight of what has occurred.

You may feel exhausted, emotionally numb, or overwhelmed by even small tasks. Concentration can be difficult, and simple decisions may feel heavier than expected. Some people feel a strong need for company, while others feel a need to withdraw and be quiet.

This is a time when rest matters. It is okay to slow down, to postpone decisions where possible, and to accept help when it is offered. There is no expectation to have answers or to know what comes next.

Right now, doing the basics is enough.



Giving Yourself Permission

In the early weeks after a loss, there can be an unspoken pressure to “be strong” or to manage everything that needs attention. This pressure often comes from within, even when others mean well.

It is okay if you feel unable to respond to messages, return calls, or make decisions straight away. It is okay if you forget things, change your mind, or need to ask questions more than once.

Where possible, allow yourself to delay decisions that do not need to be made immediately. Lean on trusted family, friends, or professionals for support, and accept help when it is offered, even if it feels uncomfortable to do so.

Grief is demanding. Being gentle with yourself is not a sign of weakness, it is a necessary part of caring for yourself during this time.

When the World Moves On

As weeks pass, life around you may begin to return to its usual rhythm. Friends go back to work, messages become less frequent, and expectations, spoken or unspoken, can begin to shift.

This is often when grief feels heavier, not lighter.

Without the activity and support that followed the funeral, the reality of loss can settle more deeply. You may feel more aware of what is missing, or more alone in your grief. Some people begin to question whether what they are feeling is “normal” or worry that they should be coping better by now.

These feelings are common. They do not mean you are failing, and they do not mean you are stuck.

Grief does not follow the same timeline as the world around you. When support fades, it can be especially important to know that care is still available, quietly, respectfully, and without expectation.

When Support Changes

As time passes, the kind of support that once surrounded you may begin to change. People often care deeply yet may not know how to continue offering help once the initial period of loss has passed.

You may find that conversations become less frequent, or that others seem unsure of what to say. Some people avoid the topic altogether, while others may unintentionally say things that feel unhelpful or dismissive.

This can leave you feeling isolated, even while being surrounded by people.

It is important to remember that changing support does not reflect a lack of care for your loss. Often, it reflects discomfort, uncertainty, or a belief that you are “doing better” simply because time has passed.

If you find yourself feeling alone, it may help to know that many people experience this part of grief and that support does not have to disappear simply because the world expects things to feel easier.

When Feelings Feel Confusing

As time passes, you may notice that your feelings begin to shift in unexpected ways. There may be moments of calm, relief, or even happiness that appear alongside your grief.

When this happens, it is common to feel guilt, confusion, or worry that you are forgetting the person who has died.

You might question whether it is acceptable to enjoy life again or feel pressure to hide moments of lightness from others.

These experiences are a natural part of grief.

Grief does not mean constant sadness. It is possible to miss someone deeply while still finding moments of comfort or joy. Allowing these moments does not diminish your love or the significance of your loss, it reflects your capacity to continue living while carrying your grief with you.

There is no betrayal in feeling okay, even briefly.

When Emotions Feel Intense or Unexpected

Grief does not always show itself as sadness. At times, it may surface as anger, frustration, irritation, or a deep sense of unfairness. These feelings can be confronting, especially if they feel out of character or difficult to explain.

You may find yourself feeling short-tempered, overwhelmed by small things, or frustrated with people who seem unable to understand what you are going through. Some people feel anger toward circumstances, systems, or even those they love.

These reactions are not uncommon.

Grief affects the whole person, emotionally, physically, and mentally. When emotions feel intense or unpredictable, it can be a sign that your mind and body are responding to profound change and loss.

Allowing these feelings space, rather than judging or suppressing them, can help ease their intensity over time.

As Grief Becomes Quieter

As the months pass, grief often becomes less visible to others, even though it remains very real for you. You may find that you are functioning more in day-to-day life, while still carrying a deep sense of absence beneath the surface.

This quieter form of grief can feel lonely. Others may assume you are “doing well” because you appear to be coping, even though you continue to think about and miss the person who has died every day.

Grief at this stage often becomes woven into your life rather than sitting front and centre. It may surface unexpectedly, in moments of reflection, during significant dates, or in small, ordinary experiences that suddenly feel different.

This does not mean your grief has faded. It means you are learning how to live alongside it.

What Can Wait, and What Can't

After a death, it can be difficult to know what needs attention straight away and what can be left for another time. When everything feels important, it is easy to feel overwhelmed.

While there are a small number of matters that may need to be addressed in the early weeks, many decisions and tasks can wait until you feel more settled. Very little needs to be done immediately.

It is okay to pause, to ask questions, and to take things one step at a time.

Some matters that often require earlier attention include those involving immediate financial, legal, or administrative needs. Others, such as sorting personal belongings, making longer-term decisions, or attending to less urgent accounts, can usually be approached gradually, when you feel ready.

If you are unsure whether something needs to be done now or later, it is okay to stop and ask. Seeking clarification can prevent unnecessary stress and help you focus your energy where it is most needed.

Above all, remember that there is no expectation to manage everything perfectly. Taking care of yourself is just as important as attending to practical matters.

Anniversaries and Significant Moments

As time passes, certain dates and moments may carry a renewed sense of grief. Anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, or ordinary events can bring memories to the surface in unexpected ways.

You may find that these times feel heavier than you anticipated, or that your emotions shift without warning. This can be surprising, especially if you have been feeling more settled in your day-to-day life.

These moments are a natural part of grief.

There is no right way to approach significant dates. Some people find comfort in quiet reflection, while others prefer distraction or connection with others. What matters most is choosing what feels supportive for you at that time.

Being aware that these moments may arise can help you meet them with understanding, rather than self-judgement.

Practical Matters: One Step at a Time

In the weeks and months following a death, there are often practical matters that need attention. These tasks can feel daunting, especially when you are already carrying the emotional weight of grief.

It is important to remember that not everything needs to be done at once.

Some things are time-sensitive, while others can wait. Taking these matters one step at a time can help reduce unnecessary pressure during an already difficult period.

You may find it helpful to keep copies of important documents, make notes as questions arise, and ask for help when things feel unclear. There is no expectation to navigate this alone, and it is okay to seek guidance or reassurance along the way.

This section is intended to provide gentle direction, not instruction, so that you can approach practical matters at a pace that feels manageable for you.

Understanding the Death Certificate

The death certificate is an important document, and it is often needed for a range of practical matters in the months ahead. While it can feel confronting to receive, understanding its purpose can help make the process feel more manageable.

You may be asked to provide a copy of the death certificate when dealing with banks, superannuation funds, insurance providers, government agencies, or utility services. For this reason, keeping several certified copies in a safe place can be helpful.

It is not unusual for organisations to request the certificate more than once, or for processes to take longer than expected. If this happens, it does not mean you are doing anything wrong, it is simply part of the administration that follows a death.

If at any point you are unsure how or when to use the death certificate, support is available to help guide you through these steps.

Notifying Organisations and Services

In time, you may need to notify certain organisations and services of the death. This process can feel repetitive and emotionally draining, especially when you are asked to recount details more than once.

Depending on your circumstances, this may include financial institutions, superannuation funds, insurers, government agencies, service providers, or professional advisers. Not all notifications need to be made immediately, and some can be completed gradually as you feel able.

It can help to keep a simple record of who you have contacted and when, so you are not relying on memory alone. Asking for written confirmation or reference numbers may also reduce the need for follow-up later. If this process feels overwhelming, it is okay to ask for help.

Many families choose to lean on trusted professionals or support services to assist with these practical steps.

Personal Belongings and Everyday Matters

Among the practical tasks that follow a death are decisions around personal belongings and everyday matters. These can be some of the most emotionally difficult steps to approach.

There is no expectation to sort, organise, or decide anything straight away. Some people prefer to attend to these matters gradually, while others find comfort in leaving them untouched for a time. Both approaches are valid.

Items that carry memories may bring comfort one moment and sadness the next. It can help to take breaks, involve trusted family or friends, or step away altogether when things feel too heavy.

Everyday matters, such as mail, subscriptions, or digital accounts, can also take time to work through. Approaching these tasks slowly, and with support where needed, can help ease the emotional load.

Be gentle with yourself as you navigate these decisions. There is no right pace, only what feels manageable for you.

Grief Support and Helpful Resources

There are many organisations and services available to support people who are grieving. Some offer immediate support during times of crisis, while others provide ongoing guidance, counselling, or community connection.

You may choose to reach out straight away, or you may simply wish to know these supports are available if you need them. Both approaches are completely valid.

24/7 Support Services

- Lifeline – 13 11 14 - Confidential support for anyone experiencing emotional distress.
- Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636 - Support for anxiety, depression, and mental wellbeing.

Grief-Specific Support

- GriefLine – 1300 845 745 - Telephone and online support for people experiencing grief and loss.
- StandBy Support After Suicide 1300 727 247 - Specialist support for people bereaved by suicide.

Community and Professional Support

- Your GP can provide guidance and referrals to local services
- Counsellors, psychologists, and grief therapists
- Faith-based or community support groups, if meaningful to you

Support can be accessed in many ways, by phone, online, or in person. You are not required to navigate grief alone, and help is available whenever you feel ready.

Looking Ahead, When You're Ready

For many people, experiencing loss can quietly change the way they think about the future. It may prompt reflections about what matters most, the people we love, and the legacy we leave behind.

There is no expectation to think about these things now, or at any particular time. For some, these thoughts arise months later. For others, they may never feel relevant at all.

When the time feels right, some families choose to have conversations about their own wishes, not because they are planning for loss, but because they want to reduce uncertainty and ease the burden on those they love.

These conversations can be simple. They may involve sharing preferences, recording important information, or ensuring that family members understand what matters to you.

Thinking ahead is not about dwelling on the end of life. It is about clarity, reassurance, and care for the people who will one day be left behind.

A Gentle Invitation

If, at some point, you feel ready to explore these conversations further, support is available in whatever way feels most comfortable to you.

For some, this may mean having a quiet conversation with a trusted family member. For others, it may involve speaking with someone experienced in guiding these discussions with care and sensitivity. There is no requirement to make decisions, and no expectation to commit to anything.

Taking time to consider your wishes can be a gift to those you love, offering clarity, reassurance, and peace of mind when it is most needed. It can also be revisited and changed as life evolves.

Whenever and however you choose to approach this, please know that guidance is available, respectfully, privately, and without pressure.



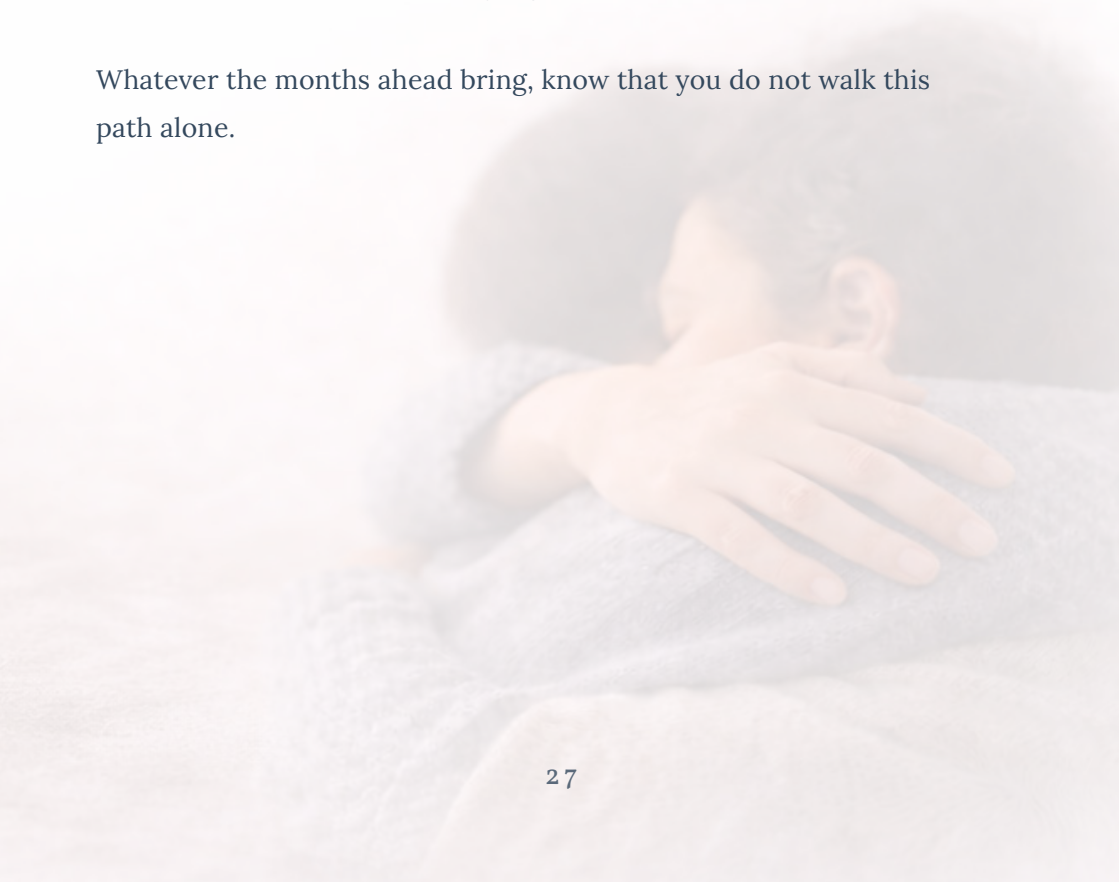
A Final Word

Grief does not end. It changes, softens, and weaves itself into life in new ways over time.

There may be days when your loss feels close and heavy, and others when it sits quietly in the background. Both are part of the same journey.

Neither means you are forgetting, and neither needs to be explained. As you move forward, please remember that support does not have an expiry date. Whether you need reassurance, guidance, or simply someone who understands, care remains available, without expectation, without pressure, and without judgement.

Whatever the months ahead bring, know that you do not walk this path alone.





MCCARTNEY FAMILY FUNERALS

*Care does not end with the service.
Support remains—whenever it is needed.*

If at any time you would like guidance, reassurance, or simply someone to speak with, our team is always here for you.

1300 043 522

mccartneyfunerals.com.au

Beyond Goodbye

Our continued care for families, beyond the service.

It's a Family Thing.