

Bears of Hope give paws for solace

BY ALISON PELS

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AMANDA Bowles, of Glenwood, has lived with the heartache of losing a child since her son Jesse was stillborn at 21 weeks in 2006.

Ms Bowles began Bears of Hope, a pregnancy- and infant-loss support group, in memory of Jesse.

"Some parents go to the hospital talking about what colour to paint the nursery and leave talking about what flowers to have at the funeral," she said.

Ms Bowles said 25 per cent of Australian pregnancies end in loss, whether through early miscarriage or stillbirth.

"We supply over 90 hospitals in NSW and the ACT with teddy bears for them to pass on to the grieving families," she said.

"Each teddy bear is donated in loving memory of another baby whose life was taken too soon."

Ms Bowles runs a monthly support group and also manages the website and forum for grieving parents, at bearsofhope.org.au.

"Parents can come together and share their experiences and feelings with other parents," she said.

"Some of them write poetry or songs and others just want to talk."
