



## **GAVIN BLUE - ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT**

Founder and President of the volunteer charity Heartfelt, Gavin Blue is a 2019 Order of Australia Medal recipient.

A successful commercial photographer based in Melbourne, Gavin works with clients in Australia and around the world.

As founder and President of Heartfelt, Gavin leads a team of over 320 volunteer photographers and retouchers across Australia and New Zealand. The charity is dedicated to providing professional photography to families who have experienced stillbirths, premature births or have children with serious and terminal illnesses.

“I’m so honoured to be recognised for our work. Creating images for families showing their love of their child is the core of what we do”, Gavin said. “Heartfelt photos help these babies and children be remembered, and gives the families some beautiful and sensitive images to share with their family and friends”.

Gavin knows first-hand the pain of losing a child, after he and his wife Kelly lost their daughter Alexandra to stillbirth in 2006.

“At counselling, we met other bereaved parents, some who only had a single Polaroid of their child. And a grieving mother who had no photos of her baby... she was so worried about forgetting what her baby looked like, she had commissioned an artist to create a drawing of her baby from her description. With my experience as a professional photographer, in leadership roles in photography industry associations, and with many connections in the photography industry, I thought I could make a difference and offer beautiful, professional photographs for parents experiencing the loss of a child. My vision for this service has always been to have the service be available, for free, to all families experiencing this loss. And for these photos to have a meaningful impact on families in this heartbreaking time.”

Heartfelt photographers volunteer their services during a family’s greatest sadness. One family wrote "Beautiful precious moments with our babies, you capture forever - a gift to a stranger in their darkest moments. That IS HEARTFELT!"

“We provide families with professional quality, gentle images that they can treasure and share. This can go a long way to help parents with the grieving process. When a family’s world is falling apart, having a total stranger volunteering to come into hospital, at any time of the day or night, on any day of the year, and provide this service to them for free, in a compassionate and caring manner, is what makes our service so special,” Gavin said.

To date, over 9,000 families have received Heartfelt’s services, at no cost.

Gavin also received the 2014 AIPP Claude McCarthy Award for outstanding service and dedication to the profession of photography.

For more information go to [www.heartfelt.org.au](http://www.heartfelt.org.au) or contact President Gavin Blue on 0419 889 877.

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