

# In memory of my brother ...



PERFECTIONIST: Rhys Rosemergy.  
PICTURE / SUPPLIED

## Choose life — not suicide, says Whangarei man

by André Hueber

Rhys Rosemergy was a perfectionist who loved all things automotive. At 21, the fully qualified Whangarei car painter owned his own house and was popular with peers and friends.

But the skilled artist committed suicide in March.

His brother, Whangarei car enthusiast Jamie Rosemergy, is customising a hot rod with a suicide awareness theme to prevent others from ending their lives like his younger brother.

"He couldn't see back where he'd been. He'd achieved so many things, he had the world at his feet... why couldn't he ask for help?" Mr Rosemergy asked.

His brother's death came as a shock but, in hindsight, there had been warning signs.

"He had some real highs and some real lows, and he sold his treasured BMW.

"We were aware he was upset and made offers to assist him. I spoke with him on Friday and he was as happy as Larry.

"He went out with his mates on Saturday and on Sunday he was dead."

It was their shared love of cars that inspired Mr Rosemergy, 31, to build a "choose life" themed hot rod to raise awareness around suicide prevention.

The project will include a website, awareness uniform and promotional boards. Lifeline's 0800 number will be painted on the side of the vehicle along with the words "choose life".

"I was always going to do something to remember him. After Rhys died, I was shocked how many others were affected by suicide.

"The car was a way to highlight these wasteful deaths and draw attention to support agencies."

After fronting up with his own money, Mr Rosemergy approached businesses and charities for support and so far has Lifeline and Lions on board as well as many others.

He found a 1972 XY Fairmont GT Shaker in Te Aroha on Trade Me — a shape of car that Rhys loved. The owner knocked \$4000 off the price when told of the project.

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"The owner's brother and two of his nieces committed suicide and he felt the car would do some good."

The car is currently just a shell and the customisation is due to be complete by March next year.

"It will be shown at hot-rod events, schools, Lifeline events and anywhere it can bring attention to the subject of suicide prevention."

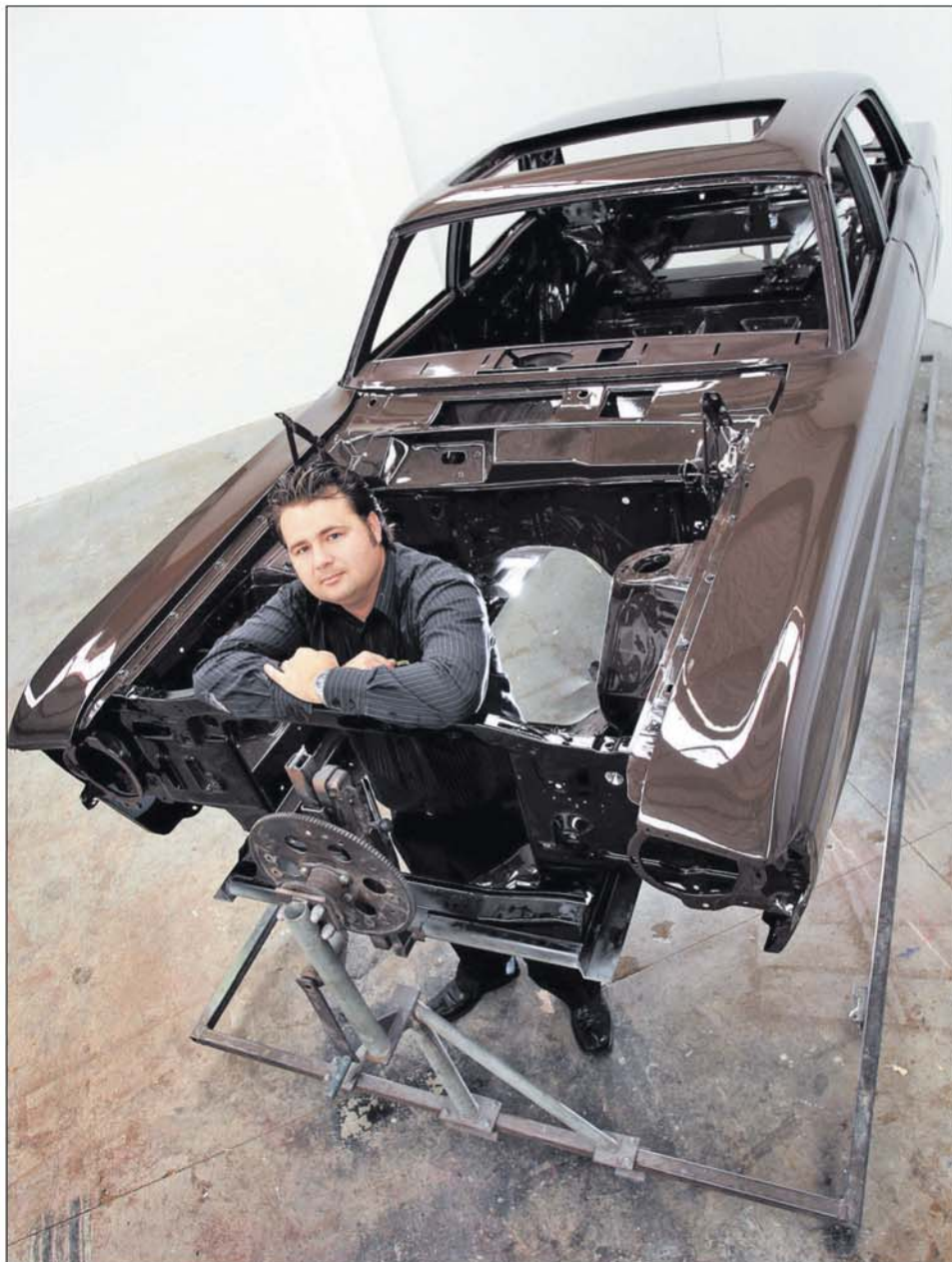
Mr Rosemergy said the project had been a form of healing for him and others involved.

"It still feels surreal... I still expect Rhys to walk in the door the next day, but it's not just family who have been going through feelings of guilt, anger and despair."

By making people realise there were avenues for help, deaths could be prevented, he said.

"If we can help one, three or 10 people, it will be worth it."

■ A bank account has been established at the National Bank — mention Choose Life Hot Rod to make a donation.



DRIVING FORCE: Jamie Rosemergy with a similar-shaped hot rod to one he is building in honour of his late brother at Whangarei's Krystal Klear paint shop. The company is a major sponsor.

PICTURE / MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM