

B.V.M. Clean Scene

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Nurses make killing in crime clean-up

By TRUDY HARRIS

WHEN Pam Marsden and Bronwyn Ward reveal their new profession to friends and family, most are somewhat horrified.

As professional crime-cleaners, the women agree that scrubbing blood from floors and strange stains from walls is not everybody's cup of tea.

But then the women, both nurses, aren't too concerned.

They have tapped into a niche, if somewhat macabre, market, and business has been growing steadily since it began about 12 months ago.

"There's murder, domestic violence, suicide — a mixed bag really," a frank Ms Marsden said this week.

"We are both trained nurses so we're used to gory details.

"Everyone's first reaction is horror. And then after that they are so fascinated they want to know everything."

"And it's pretty good dinner-party conversation," Ms Ward added.

The business involves scrubbing, mopping up and disposing of whatever remains at a crime scene. Once police have finished their work, the women move in with their goggles, gloves and ventilation masks.

"Decomposition is pretty bad



Bloody job . . . Ms Ward and Ms Marsden — Picture: ALAN PRYKE

and the smell is terribly woofy, but domestic violence is something that upsets Pam and I both," Ms Ward said.

It may sound like grim work, but both women are realists.

Few professional crime-cleaners exist in Australia, and they said, most victims of crime, police and emergency services were genuinely pleased the ser-

vice existed. "It's also not something you can just waltz into," Ms Ward said.

"We've taken a lot of research and investigation to develop special techniques and identify appropriate chemicals so we can do the job properly."

"There's a lot of incineration. We have to remove beds and sometimes carpet so all that has

to be dealt with correctly." Late last year, they were kept busy cleaning the basement of the Blackmarket cafe in inner Sydney after three Bandidos bikies were shot dead. Christmas has also been steady.

"It's quite a violent time. I think alcohol tends to prompt these sort of things," Ms Ward said.

The pair have recently returned from a domestic violence job in the country.

"A husband did his wife in and stabbed his daughter," Ms Marsden said bluntly.

The idea for the business came after reading an article in the Australian Financial Review about a similar business in the US.

The women looked into the concept and soon after began advertising their business, BVM Clean Scene — mainly distributing brochures to ambulances, police stations and funeral directors, among others.

"Yellow Pages had the biggest quandary about where to list us. The poor girl was pulling her hair out," Ms Ward said.

Ms Marsden said their families had been supportive, sometimes helping with larger jobs.

"My husband was a bit horrified at first although he gets faint when you spell hospital, but he's coping quite well now," she said.