



YOU ARE
SPECIAL



YOU ARE
STRONG



ANNUAL
REPORT
2020-21



YOU ARE
BRAVE



You are **strong**

*"When I think of Very Special Kids I think of how much love they give and how much determination they have. What they do is just amazing. It's unbelievable. It's spectacular."
- Steph.*

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Our Impact



Our Vision

Families supporting a child with a life limiting condition find and sustain hope.

Our Mission

Very Special Kids provides holistic care for Victorian families facing the potential death of a child.

We provide:

- Counselling and emotional support for the whole family
- Extended and medically-supported respite care
- End-of-life care and long term bereavement support

Goals Strategies

PURSUE SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- Build a world class hospice to meet families' needs.
- Enhance accessibility to services.
- Evaluate and improve our model of care.
- Foster collaborative practices with key partners.

STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

- Grow and diversify our income streams.
- Implement and achieve our hospice fundraising campaign.
- Ensure responsible financial sustainability.

OPTIMISE ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

- Infrastructure, systems and processes are fit for purpose now and into the future.
- Ensure our organisational structure supports service delivery.
- Foster an environment that embraces and brings our values to life.

LEADERS IN FAMILY-CENTRED PAEDIATRIC PALLIATIVE CARE

- Grow and share our expertise in paediatric palliative care.
- Advocate for better paediatric palliative care across Australia.

867

FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY VERY SPECIAL KIDS



103

EMPLOYEES



5,644

VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS



2



SIBLING DAYS FOR BEREAVED AND NON-BEREAVED

98

FAMILIES REFERRED TO VERY SPECIAL KIDS

24

FAMILIES SUPPORTED THROUGH END-OF-LIFE CARE IN HOSPITAL OR HOSPICE

21

FAMILIES SUPPORTED THROUGH END-OF-LIFE CARE IN THE HOME

194



FAMILIES VIEWED ONLINE REMEMBRANCE DAY VIDEO

1,791

SPECIALISED NIGHTS OF RESPITE

5,108

COUNSELLING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SESSIONS

1:7

STAFF TO VOLUNTEER RATIO

1,241

NIGHTS OF ON-SITE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED TO FAMILIES

352

NIGHTS AT GLEN OSMOND FARM PROVIDED TO FAMILIES

78

END-OF-LIFE CARE NIGHTS IN THE HOSPICE



21

COFFEE GROUPS HOSTED FOR PARENTS



1,607

FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS



Our Values



Respect

Recognising the individual, welcoming diversity and nurturing choice



Collaboration

Building connections, strengthening relationships and partnerships



Community

Creating supportive relationships and a sense of belonging



Compassion

Being welcoming and showing warmth, hope and empathy



Learning

Enhancing and sharing our skills, experiences, knowledge and wisdom



Integrity

Acting ethically, honestly, fairly and with accountability

You are **special**



Message from our Chair and CEO

We are incredibly proud of how the Very Special Kids community has navigated the uncharted territory we found ourselves in during the global pandemic.

REMAINING FLEXIBLE AND RESILIENT

Ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns continued to impact Very Special Kids during the 2020-21 period. Once again, the response and dedication demonstrated by our frontline staff towards the wellbeing of our families was exemplary, ensuring families felt supported despite the sense of isolation that was heightened during periodic lockdowns. Hospice support continued throughout the year, with increased use of PPE and infection control measures. Family Support engagement activities were predominantly undertaken via telehealth in the first five months of 2020-21, however were able to include community face-to-face contacts thereafter.

INCREASING OUR REACH AND IMPACT WITH FAMILIES

Very Special Kids continued supporting 867 families throughout Victoria, including 93 new connections during 2020-21. Our counsellors continued to adapt family programs and activities to reflect the permissible guidelines of that time, and some of the innovative practices that were created in response to COVID-19 will be adopted into future service planning. Despite COVID-19 impacts to our fundraising, most of our development therapy supports were able to be sustained, and in some cases increased.

The In-Home Pilot, whereby respite and end-of-life care was trialled in a family's home, was supported by several families and staff. The significant learnings gained from this pilot will assist Very Special Kids during the hospice rebuild period, and once the pilot evaluation is completed, recommendations will be made for future service delivery and strategic improvement planning.



From Left:
Peter Polson, Chair
Michael Wasley, CEO
Sister Margaret Noone,
Patron and Founder

THE NEW VERY SPECIAL KIDS HOSPICE

A significant strategy in improving the support to families has been the planning and design of the new hospice. The new world-class facility is now fully designed, and thanks to the Victorian Government's \$7.5m grant in November, and the outstanding efforts of the Very Special Project Campaign Committee, the project is now fully funded. Thank you to the many donors who have been so generous in supporting this important project. The rebuild commenced in August 2021 and the new facility is set to open in early 2023. We would like to also thank Monash Children's Hospital for their partnership in allowing us to offer respite support from their facility in the interim. It is extremely important to many families that our hospice support services be maintained during the rebuild.

SUSTAINABILITY

As a predominantly self-funded organisation, the COVID-19 impacts during 2020-21 were challenging. Most fundraising activities during the year were cancelled and while some events in early 2021 were undertaken, operational fundraising income was significantly down on previous years. A significant deficit was avoided due to the Federal Government's JobKeeper program and fundraising staff were able to devote part of the year to developing strategies for alternative future fundraising opportunities.

A large deficit and reduced cash savings were avoided due to a large unforeseen bequest, and therefore Very Special Kids was able to end the year with a healthy surplus and a recovered cash position. While uncertainty remains regarding our capacity to hold our traditional fundraising events in the short term, we are confident that the organisation will emerge from the pandemic in a healthy and sustainable position.

The Board's conservative approach to the management of Very Special Kids will ensure that families can continue to rely on current and future support.

GOVERNANCE AND THE BOARD

Our established governance systems continue to provide important direction to management, ensuring all operational challenges and responses to COVID-19 are considered with an optimal balance between accountability and responsiveness. Our Clinical Risk and Governance and Family Advisory Committees decide on service directions that include input from consumer representatives. The Finance Risk and Audit Committee continues to oversee important aspects of financial and risk management, while a new Hospice Rebuild Committee leads Very Special Kids through the entire hospice rebuild program. We remain extremely grateful for the ongoing strategic connections and support we receive from the Foundation Committee each year.

THANK YOU

The 2020-21 year was difficult for many Victorians, especially our families, as well as our donors, corporate partners and volunteers. We are extremely grateful that despite this year's challenges, our incredible army of loyal stakeholders and supporters continued to maintain their commitment and generosity towards Very Special Kids. Our work with seriously ill children and families across Victoria is only possible thanks to the kind assistance we receive from so many in the community. We are so thankful to everyone involved in Very Special Kids for your continued effort and support.

Peter Polson Chair
Michael Wasley CEO

A message from our Patron and Founder

The last 12 months have been challenging for so many of the children and families we support, and I am continually inspired by their resilience and strength, and that of our staff and volunteers.

As an organisation, we are proud to have continued supporting children and their families, albeit through different means, at a time when these families have been more isolated than ever. The compassion and dedication of our team at Very Special Kids has meant we have found new ways to provide care and comfort during these incredibly tough times.

For many families, just knowing that our staff and volunteers are here when they need them, is comfort enough. To give them a break, bring some joy to their child's day or help them reflect on their loss, is so important to us and more rewarding than you could imagine.

I am also very excited that we have been able to move forward with our hospice project and are well on our way to commence building our wonderful new facility. The new hospice is an exciting step towards the future and will allow us to provide care for generations to come.

It has been reassuring to hear from families who are also excited to see the plans for the new hospice. We look forward to welcoming children to stay and giving their families time to rest, relax and spend quality time together.

The world can be very difficult and cruel at times, but we are here for each and every family, and for the wider community if they ever need us.

Sister Margaret Noone, Patron and Founder AM IBVM

29

REGISTERED NURSES
WORKING IN HOSPICE,
PLUS 2 ENROLLED
NURSES



18

PERSONAL CARE
WORKERS



1 CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER



3 VISITING MEDICAL OFFICERS



3 THERAPISTS



608 ARTS THERAPY SESSIONS



247 MUSIC THERAPY SESSIONS



660 PHYSIOTHERAPY SESSIONS



168 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SESSIONS



100 CHILD LIFE THERAPY SESSIONS

Leaders in Children's Palliative Care

Very Special Kids is a recognised leader in palliative care for children and young people in Australia and is the only provider of its kind in Victoria.

We provide professional, practical and emotional support services, respite and end-of-life care to Victorian children with life-limiting conditions, improving overall quality of life for them and their families. The pandemic pushed us to do many things differently and we are proud of the agility shown by our team – including counsellors, nurses, doctors, therapists, personal care workers and specially trained volunteers – to keep our children and their families supported and engaged during this time.

ENHANCING THE WAY WE CARE

At Very Special Kids it's important that we continue to stay abreast of best practice in paediatric palliative care. A key focus of the training this year was enhancing our infection control practices.

These practices needed to be heightened due to the pandemic, as many of our children are potentially more vulnerable to COVID-19. We delivered training and support to hospice team members in the correct use of PPE and adherence to government guidelines.

We continue to hold bi-annual training weeks to ensure all mandatory training is completed by our team. These training weeks also cover relevant education based on the needs highlighted by staff or informed by incident reports. They also cover general refreshers for our ongoing professional development to ensure the best care is given to the children and families that we support.

Another way we are encouraging ongoing learning and continuous improvement is through a Journal Club. The club explores different journal articles and meets every six weeks, generating many thought-provoking discussions and prompting various improvement projects, principles and outcomes.



Above: The team at bi-annual training.

By continuing to educate and train our hospice staff, it will not only help develop our multidisciplinary team, but the hospice as a whole will be able to provide an even more comprehensive and holistic service to children and their families.

CARING IN THE HOME

The need for care in the home was made clear through a survey of 220 Very Special Kids families, with 88 percent indicating that they wish to use in-home respite and end-of-life care. This number includes many families who do not currently use respite services but felt that in-home respite would provide an additional service that would better meet their family's individual needs.

Trialling a range of in-home care options while the hospice was still operating gave us the opportunity to determine the most effective and efficient service delivery models to offer families during the disruption whilst completing the hospice re-build.

The pilot also provided Very Special Kids the opportunity to trial the delivery of end-of-life care in the family home. Whilst many families would prefer to have their child die at home rather than hospital, some are not confident enough to provide the 24/7 clinical care and pain management required. By providing in-home nursing care, Very Special Kids could relieve families of their clinical care responsibilities, enabling them to fully focus on being "mum and dad" and ensuring that their child is able to die comfortably in the place of their choice, with the people they love.

Throughout this trial, 68 sessions of respite and end-of-life care were delivered to children in their home.



DR SUSIE GIBB

Dr Susie Gibb is a general and developmental paediatrician at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Susie joined the Board of Very Special Kids in 2017, is Chair of the Clinical Risk and Governance Committee and serves on the Hospice Rebuild Committee. Susie has played a crucial role in providing guidance and support during a time of significant change, alongside the added challenges presented by the pandemic.

"Having seen the wonderful way children and families I look after have been supported by Very Special Kids over the years, it is an honour and privilege to be able to contribute in this way."

Dr Susie Gibb

Of the 68 sessions, 22 were home respite and 46 sessions were end-of-life care for five children. Furthermore, 25 of these sessions were for one child who was provided with round-the-clock care over nine days.

One family reflected and expressed that the pilot provided a "Providing me with a break knowing my child was being well cared for by experienced Very Special Kids staff".

An independent evaluation of the in-home pilot is being undertaken that will help Very Special Kids determine the demand and capacity for potential in-home supports in the future.



395

BEREAVED FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY A FAMILY SUPPORT PRACTITIONER

472

NON-BEREAVED FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY A FAMILY SUPPORT PRACTITIONER

568 METRO MELBOURNE FAMILIES

285 REGIONAL VICTORIAN FAMILIES

14 INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS FAMILIES

17 FAMILY SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS SUPPORTING FAMILIES ACROSS VICTORIA

The expansion of our services to outer metro areas continues with a new position being added to the outer south-eastern metro area. We will also see the Brunswick office relocated to join the Yarraville office, forming a Western Metro centre.

Supporting children and families across Victoria

Our services are available to children and families across Victoria. We bring together our clinical and therapeutic experts, advisors, trained counsellors and experienced family volunteers to create tailored support plans and programs for the child's care and the family's journey. Our multidisciplinary support services from trained family experts and volunteers include counselling, advocacy, sibling support, bereavement support, networking and peer activities and specialist care at the hospice.

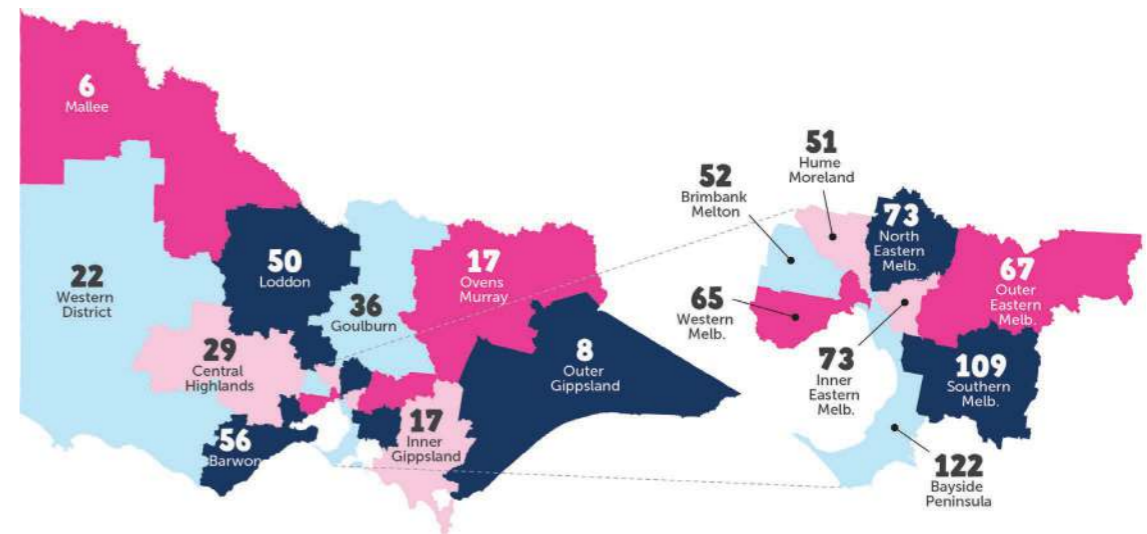
We are the only children's hospice in Victoria to offer families access to planned and emergency respite, as well as end-of-life care. The hospice provides 24-hour specialist nursing care in a warm and welcoming environment.

Throughout the pandemic, we have innovated and embraced new ways of delivering our services, especially via telehealth and online services, ensuring we continued to meet the needs of the families we support. While we look forward to a return to normalcy, we are also excited to retain the new approaches that have enhanced what we do – especially telehealth support, particularly beneficial to regional families, and improved infection control practices.

EXPANDING SERVICES TO MELBOURNE'S NORTH

Families in the outer North have been thrilled at the opening of the new office in South Morang, enabling them to access a range of programs locally and enjoy some fun-filled sibling and family days.

After the first Northern Sibling Day held in April, one parent reflected, "Our daughter had just been admitted to hospital again, so for her sisters to have an activity to support them was such a gift. The quick 20-minute trip was super convenient, and we all really hope Very Special Kids can offer Epping activity days again."



Parents enjoyed a well-deserved break while the siblings connected with others facing a similar journey in their local community. We were fortunate to hold the sibling days in between periods of restrictions, a valuable chance for the children to enjoy face-to-face activities and access to our services locally.

In June, an indoor family day in Epping saw more than 30 people enjoy art activities, billy cart making and racing, a delicious lunch and plenty of inter-generational mixing. Our team were thrilled with the connections made between siblings and family members who had met earlier in the year.

Expanding Sibling Programs to the outer North was made possible thanks to a generous grant provided by Freemasons Foundation Victoria. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with one parent sharing, "The kids came home bursting from excitement, absolutely raving about the best day ever! Thank you for putting all of this together."

YARRAVILLE BEREAVED PARENT GROUP

With thanks to financial support from Freemasons Foundation Victoria, a recent pilot program gave parents the opportunity to reflect and share the meaning of the death of their child and how it impacts their lives. Specialist Family Support practitioners ran the four-week program for the

Yarraville Bereaved Parent Group, which aimed to:

- offer a structured support group to bereaved parents
- encourage communication within family systems
- normalise grief experiences and build resilience
- provide families with an opportunity to make connections with other bereaved parents.

The theoretical framework for the program included inviting participants to read and discuss *Bearing The Unbearable*, a book by Dr Joanne Cacciatore, which was incredibly well received.

The feedback from these parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Some noted that they felt apprehensive beforehand but once face-to-face meetings were possible those feelings melted away. There was a connection to the struggle other parents were experiencing, and relief to be invited to talk about their children with those who understand the acute pain of loss and grief.

"I feel like the course is stirring and planting seeds of healing that I had not quite uncovered," noted one parent. Another said, "We developed a sense of connection amongst the group. Although our circumstances are different it didn't matter as our grief was the same."

MEET ANGIE DREDGE

General Manager Service Delivery and Improvement

My role as General Manager supports the service delivery component of Very Special Kids strategically and operationally. Collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to provide paediatric palliative care for children and families, which is safe, personal, effective and connected in an environment that promotes quality of life.

Since commencing at Very Special Kids in early 2021 my role has been varied, with the relocation of the hospice to Monash Children's Hospital taking priority. Identification of areas of innovation and improvement, in line with the National Standards, is a constant focus to ensure that the services we provide are responsive to the individual child and family's needs.



Staying connected with families throughout the pandemic

This year continued to present challenges for many people across the community, including Very Special Kids and the children and families in our care. Heightened levels of isolation and anxiety continued to add pressure to the health response for those in need.

As part of Very Special Kids' response to these ongoing pressures, we have worked determinedly to adapt the way we deliver care to ensure children and their families have access to receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

We have continued providing essential respite and end-of-life care to families, maintained vital counselling support and connection during the lockdowns, and our staff have embraced technology and adapted incredibly well to telehealth services.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES ONLINE

A new online bereaved parent evening held every six weeks has been embraced by families from across Victoria and even interstate. The increased reach and convenience enabled by online services, particularly for families in regional areas, are silver-linings of the pandemic and we intend to keep these online options as part of our regular offerings beyond COVID-19.

For the first time, we also commenced an online bereaved sibling group which provides a safe and caring online space for bereaved siblings to have fun, connect and share experiences, as we have learnt from children how valuable peer support can be.

The children found connecting with others facing similar circumstances beneficial commenting that:

"the best bit was not having to put a fake face on". Their parents also found the group valuable and an opportunity to make connections with other bereaved parents. "This gives me strength".

EMBRACING TELEHEALTH

COVID-19 has required a rapid transition to telehealth services to keep our children, families and staff healthy and safe. Our team have embraced telehealth and virtual means of communicating and caring for families as a substitute to face-to-face contact.

We care for children across the state, and it can be stressful for families to navigate traveling long distances or time off work to visit our metro or regional offices. So telehealth has actually enhanced our ability to connect with families, especially in regional Victoria, with staff showing some wonderful creativity in using this technology to connect with children and families.

Telehealth is just one example of how we are looking to enhance our care for children and families into the future.

ZOOM ROOM

Our Zoom Room continued to prove popular as a therapeutic online space for our Very Special Kids community – including children, their siblings, parents, carers, nurses and volunteers. Led by a music therapist, these story and music sessions are designed to be engaging and fun for people of all ages and backgrounds. As with many online offerings, Zoom Room has been wonderful in allowing families from diverse backgrounds and regional areas to be involved.

One family commented "It has been so great that Very Special Kids have been able to offer this service to our children while coping with COVID-19. I really hope and would love to see this continue, you bring so much love and warmth to our home when we hear you sing."

ZOOM ROOMS

August 2020 –
March 2021:

39 SESSIONS

821 PARTICIPANTS



SWEET, SWEET JAFFA

One of the most enjoyable aspects for children visiting the hospice for a respite stay is being welcomed at the door by our furriest team member, Jaffa the Therapy Dog.

Jaffa is a beautiful Labrador Retriever but she is so much more than a friendly face – she's gentle and calming and highly intuitive, always ensuring that the children who need her most have her utmost attention. She is always a welcomed distraction for our children and staff.

Jaffa brings many smiles to the faces of everyone who meets her – children, families, staff and volunteers alike. Apart from her cuteness factor, there are many inspiring stories of children reluctant to get out of bed, but who will happily take the leash and walk her up and down the path or onto the front lawn for a game of fetch. Physiotherapy sessions often involve Jaffa to help encourage movement when working with some children, and many distressed children have been calmed off to sleep with Jaffa by their side.

Time spent with Jaffa can also be especially meaningful to a child who is missing their own pet back at home, bringing normality to children in an abnormal, difficult and sometimes stressful situation. She can even help the kids turn the pages of their books!

The Dog Therapy program aims to improve the overall well-being of children through positive contact and it's wonderful to see the benefits Jaffa provides to our children and staff since joining the team full time in February 2021.



Transdev are hoping to raise \$10,000 in 2021 to support our Therapy Dog Program and we thank Transdev for your wonderful and ongoing support.

Rachel Spencer, Interim Managing Director, said "We strongly believe in giving back to the communities in which we operate. We hope that our support will raise awareness and funds which will allow Very Special Kids to continue providing much needed hope and comfort for Victorian families who have a child with a life-threatening condition."

International recognition for our Physiotherapist

In 2020, Very Special Kids' physiotherapist Belinda Luther was awarded a Churchill Fellowship which will enable her to visit paediatric hospices in the United Kingdom and Ireland to meet, learn from and collaborate with the world leaders in this field.

Belinda will spend six to eight weeks overseas, once travel restrictions change, with the aim of bringing best practice physiotherapy to Australian paediatric palliative care on her return.

Belinda was inspired to apply following encouragement from Patron Sister Margaret Noone, who was a Churchill Fellowship recipient in 1989.

"The fellowship has already enabled me to connect with physiotherapists who work in the UK hospices and I've attended two virtual conferences. It's incredible to have the opportunity to enhance the physiotherapy I can provide at Very Special Kids, even before my fellowship travel."

Belinda has played a key role in the new hospice development, which is set to include a hydrotherapy pool and improved outdoor and indoor play areas to promote physical activity. The timing of her fellowship will align well with the rebuild, giving further insight into the benefits of aquatic and land-based physiotherapy in a paediatric hospice setting.

She looks forward to sharing what she learns with Very Special Kids, other paediatric hospices in Australia, the broader physiotherapy community and paediatric palliative care networks so that ultimately all children who require palliative care in Australia will receive the best available physiotherapy support.

"This is a wonderful achievement and will help raise the profile of physiotherapy in a children's hospice setting. We are all so proud of her and we know it was a lot of effort that has all paid off," said Very Special Kids Chief Executive Officer, Michael Wasley.

THANK YOU TO THE BARR FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Barr Family Foundation has been funding Belinda's physiotherapy position within our hospice since 2017. We're incredibly grateful for this long-term support, which has positively impacted hundreds of children staying at our hospice.



You are **supported**

Physiotherapy plays a significant role in enhancing the lives of children with life-limiting conditions. It maximises independence and mobility for children, enabling participation as well as ensuring comfortable and supportive positioning and posture. Physiotherapy also helps with managing pain and respiratory symptoms.

TIMELINE

2016

ISSUES PAPER PRESENTED WITH
OUTCOMES FOR UPGRADE IDENTIFIED

2017

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY ENGAGED TO
UNDERTAKE RESEARCH ON VSK MODEL
OF HOSPICE CARE AND INTERNATIONAL
BEST PRACTICE STUDY

2018

AUGUST
PHILANTHROPIC FEASIBILITY STUDY

2019

MARCH
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING
OF \$7.5 MILLION ANNOUNCED

SEPTEMBER
ENGAGED PROJECT MANAGER

CAMPAIGN BLUEPRINT AND PLAN
DEVELOPED

DECEMBER
CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE FORMED

2020

FEBRUARY
KEY STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS

JULY-SEPTEMBER
COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT DESIGN
REQUEST FOR TENDERS

SEPTEMBER
COMPLETE FULL SCHEMATIC DESIGN
AND LODGE TO TOWN PLANNING

2021

FEBRUARY
CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

APRIL-JUNE
BUILDER EVALUATION AND
ENGAGEMENT

JUNE
COMMUNITY APPEAL

JULY-SEPTEMBER
PRELIMINARY SITE WORKS; RELOCATION
OF CURRENT FACILITY TO NEW SITE AND
REMOVAL OF OLD HOSPICE

OCTOBER 2021 - 2023
CONSTRUCTION

2023

HOSPICE OPENS



New Hospice build underway

Machinery and tradespeople in hi-vis vests will be the new norm at Very Special Kids from August 2021, as construction of the new building begins. COVID-19 restrictions notwithstanding, we aim to celebrate the opening of the new hospice in the first quarter of 2023.

This is a landmark moment, by far the most significant improvement project in our history. The new world-class children's hospice will ensure the highest level of internationally led best practice palliative care can be delivered for children with life-limiting conditions and their families across Victoria for generations to come.

We acknowledge the magnitude of the support from the Federal and State governments, with each contributing \$7.5 million to make the hospice rebuild project a reality.

It is also thanks to our remarkable donors and funders from across the community, backed by the efforts of our Capital Campaign Committee, that the first milestone has been achieved.

The project has an overall target of \$22.5m, encompassing demolition, construction of the new world class centre and operational costs to ensure best practice care into the future.

Our highest priority remains to provide support and care for families with a sick child with minimum disruption. It is with great thanks that we have secured a dedicated space at Monash Children's Hospital, with the capacity to accommodate four beds for planned and emergency respite, as well as a separate space for end-of-life care.

Families and children can access all activity spaces and facilities throughout the hospital, including group

therapy areas, indoor and outdoor spaces, play areas and therapy rooms. Our Family Support program continues as normal, along with both face-to-face and phone/video consultations, and therapy programs.

Our original hospice provided thousands of seriously-ill children and their families with a home away from home for over 25 years. Today, the clinical needs of children are significantly more advanced and children are living longer with these conditions into adolescence, thereby placing higher care needs upon their families as full-time carers.

Very Special Kids is a predominantly self-funded organisation, relying on the generosity of donors and the community. A heartfelt thank you to our generous community and both Federal and State Governments for sharing our vision and making this dream a reality.



BEST PRACTICE DESIGN FEATURES



EIGHT LARGER BEDROOMS WITH INDIVIDUAL ENSUITES



1:2 CHILD TO STAFF RATIO



PRIVATE END-OF-LIFE AREA TO RESPECT FAMILIES FINAL WISHES



SEPARATE SPACES FOR ART AND MUSIC THERAPY, A MULTI-SENSORY ROOM, MULTI-MEDIA ROOM, SOFT PLAY SPACE, AND ADDITIONAL THERAPY SERVICES



HYDROTHERAPY POOL FOR PHYSIOTHERAPY, PAIN AND COMFORT MANAGEMENT



NEW TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE CLINICAL CARE EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX CARE NEEDS



DISCREET ADOLESCENT SPACES TO BETTER ACCOMMODATE THEIR MATURITY



WELL-BEING AREA FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TO DEBRIEF



UNDERCOVER OUTDOOR PLAY AREA WITH PLAY EQUIPMENT



SLEEK DESIGN SPANNING THREE STOREYS



ENCOMPASSING NATURAL LIGHT AND WARMTH VIA A CENTRAL COURTYARD, SKYLIGHTS AND NATURAL BUILDING MATERIALS



PIPED OXYGEN AND SUCTION AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT SO CHILDREN CAN MOVE FREELY INSIDE AND OUTSIDE



UNDERGROUND CARPARKING FOR STAFF AND FAMILIES



EFFECTIVE SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL COMPLEXITIES



GREEN STAR AND BESS ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, INCLUDING SOLAR ENERGY

“The hospice fills a crucial gap in Victoria’s health system, providing 24/7 medically specialised paediatric and palliative care for vulnerable families.”

Very Special Kids General Manager Service Delivery and Improvement Angie Dredge said the word ‘hospice’ is often misunderstood: “A children’s hospice is very different to an adult’s hospice. Here, a child comes to us and it’s all about providing fun, quality of life and laughter, even in their most difficult times. We give parents a much-needed rest, we help them understand their child’s condition, and provide coping strategies”.

Another misconception is that a hospice is where children go to die. At Very Special Kids, they celebrate life. Many happy memories are made through special experiences such as music therapy, and animal and equine therapy. Parents who have sadly had to go through the pain of having a sick and dying child agree, saying that they can’t put a price on the support and care they’ve received from Very Special Kids.

When it opens in 2023, the new hospice will ensure that vulnerable children and their families will receive the very best and most comfortable support. This “life-saver” and “godsend” for families is much more than a building.

“We are now part of a community where children are different, but they are all included and celebrated,” said Cory Mitchell, father of Elliott, who requires 24/7 care.



Below: Capital Campaign Committee



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

Thanks to our generous community of supporters, we are about to take our first steps to bring this dream to life.

Over the past couple of years, we have been working hard to secure funding for this initiative through Federal and State Governments as well as many generous individuals and organisations.

With special thanks to our Capital Campaign Committee – chaired by Andy Penn, including Paula Fox AO (Patron), Connie Kimberley (Patron), The Hon. Kelly O’Dwyer, Glenn Carmody, Neville Azzopardi, Peter Polson, and Sister Margaret Noone – who have worked tirelessly to secure the funds needed to commence A Very Special Project. It has been an honour and on behalf of Michael Wasley, Chief Executive Officer and the Very Special Kids Board of Management, thank you to the Committee for your leadership, passion, contribution, and commitment. The new Very Special Kids Hospice would not be possible without you.



Wil's Story

"Very Special Kids makes a massive difference for us because they don't just help the child, they help everyone in our entire family." Mel, Wil's mum.

At a routine pregnancy scan at 31 weeks, Mel was told her precious baby was going into heart failure and needed to be delivered immediately. From that moment on, Mel has lived with the fear, stress and anxiety that comes with a child's life-limiting illness.

Her son Wil, now ten years old, has been diagnosed with multiple serious conditions throughout his short life including heart issues, lung problems, leukaemia, epilepsy and developmental delays. Every one of these conditions requires complex medical care and limits what the family can do.

Wil absolutely loves coming to the hospice to play fun games with our energetic team. The hospice is a home-away-from home where kids like Wil love taking part in activities such as arts therapy, where paintings and artworks are created using their emotional, sensory and motor skills. Creative Arts Therapy enables expression beyond words while also building a legacy for those children in palliative care.

At the hospice, Wil gets to enjoy just being a kid in the safety of our expert care, while his mum and his siblings can do the things that aren't possible with Wil's complex needs, like a spontaneous outing to the movies. It's a much-needed break for the whole family.

Thanks to the generosity from Crown Resorts Foundation and Packer Family Foundation, Creative Arts Therapy helps kids like Wil be themselves and express and reflect on their feelings, thoughts and experiences during their stay at the hospice.

Creative Arts Therapy is delivered in partnership with Creative Art Therapy Australia (CATA), and throughout 2020-21, children like Wil have benefitted from:

- 184 holiday program sessions
- 306 hospice program sessions
- 118 outreach sessions

Source: Creative Art Therapy Australia

Steph's Story

"Very Special Kids is the most amazing thing that's ever happened to me. I have a disease that drains your energy, until you give up. I want other kids, and families, to have faith. I want other kids to look their disease in the eye and say 'you suck, but I can beat you'. The team at Very Special Kids has helped me to see that."



Thirteen-year-old Steph has been in and out of hospital her whole life. At 10-weeks-old, Steph was diagnosed with nystagmus. Then after years of extensive nerve damage to Steph's hands, feet and mouth, the family received the news that she has mitochondrial disease, a debilitating and potentially fatal condition.

At age eight, she lost the ability to walk and after the death of her husband that same year, Steph's mum Kylie knew she needed extra support. Kylie had heard about Very Special Kids through some of the paediatric services Steph was using and decided to self-refer.

"At that time, it was more about getting help for Robbie (Steph's brother) because I didn't feel I had the capability or capacity to truly help him through all of this, especially at school, but what I quickly learned was how much Very Special Kids supports the whole family," Kylie said.

Since then, their specialist Family Support Practitioner has provided individual care for all three through counselling, support, advocacy and communicating with the school about Robbie and Steph's needs.

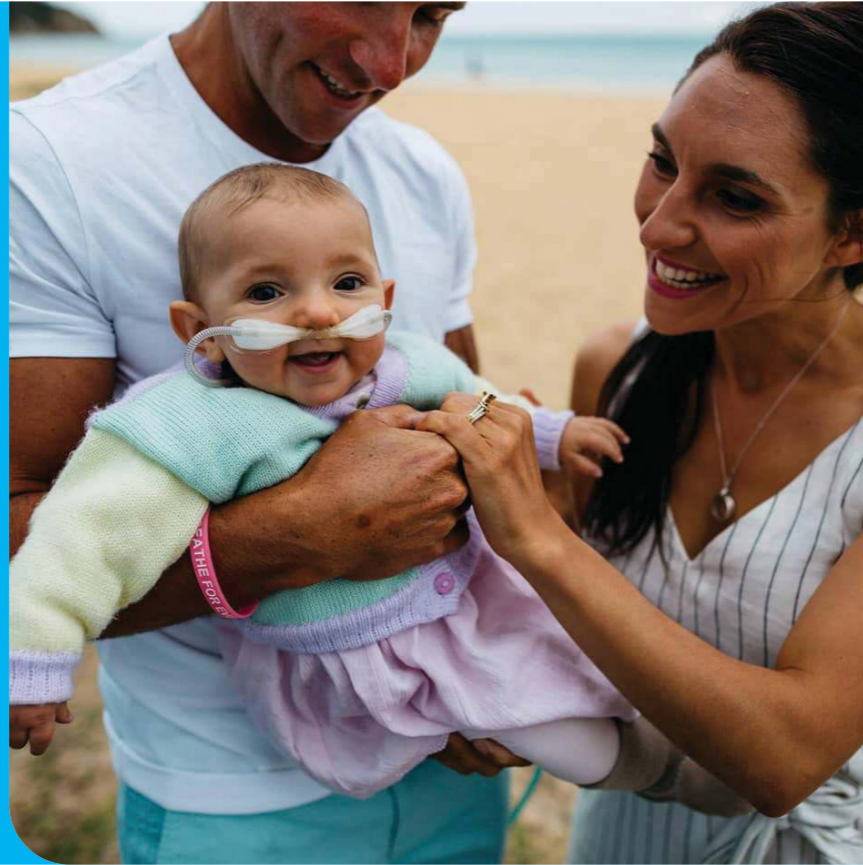
The respite available through our hospice has made all the difference to this family. "Going in you just instantly feel at home... In every way they think about 'how do we ease the burden?'," said Kylie.

"Very Special Kids has given me the confidence I need to continue with a happier life. I've made so many different friends there, and it's just truly inspiring to see people get up, and come and look after sick children," said Steph. "When I think of Very Special Kids I think of how much love they give and how much determination they have. What they do is just amazing. It's unbelievable. It's spectacular." – Steph.

THANK YOU TO IAN AND KRISTEEN URQUHART
Ian and Kristeen Urquhart have generously supported Very Special Kids for many years and in 2020-21 provided significant funding towards vital allied health services like child life therapy and occupational therapy. These allied health programs ensure children like Steph have the best experience possible at the hospice. Due to the challenges presented by COVID-19, the Urquhart's generously agreed to apply their funding to where it was needed most. Without incredibly generous supporters like Ian and Kristeen, we would be unable to offer these essential services free-of-charge to those who desperately need support.

Eve's Story

Georgie and Shaun adore their happy, joyful little girl Eve – but it's been an extremely tough two years for the pair who haven't had a day away from caring for Eve since she was born.



Eve has spent her whole life in and out of hospital with a condition so rare it doesn't have a name of its own. It comes under the umbrella of a lung and heart condition called Interstitial Lung Disease and Pulmonary Hypertension. It doesn't have a cure or a long-term treatment plan, and knowing it makes Eve more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus has added to Georgie and Shaun's burden of worry.

Despite the joy Eve brings, Georgie and Shaun were exhausted. Very Special Kids reached out to offer counselling and Georgie and Shaun have been talking to their Family Support Practitioner every week, ever since.

"Very Special Kids are a lifeline to us," says Georgie. "They're our main support network offering everything from respite, to advice on equipment, and someone to talk to. They've helped us stay afloat emotionally through the toughest of times."

"We can't do this on our own, but none of our family or friends knows what it's like to be in our shoes. So we need support from people who do know what it's like," says Georgie.

This is exactly why Very Special Kids exists; we know what it's like and provide the support families like Eve's desperately need.



Jonah's Story

The Greenland family refer to Very Special Kids as a club that not many people know about, and that you wouldn't choose to be part of. But, rather than focusing their energy on the heartbreaking circumstances that brought them into the Very Special Kids club, the family show remarkable determination to create hope and positivity from their experience.

Amy and Brett faced an unbearable prospect in 2018. They had three children when they found out they were having twins, but were told early in the pregnancy that one of the twins was unlikely to be born alive.

This was a devastating time for the family and it's only now, three years later, that they feel ready to share their story.

They describe Jonah's story as one of hope. He was a fighter. When Jonah was born, the paediatrician told Amy and Brett they may only have a few minutes before he passed. But six minutes later when twin brother Caleb was born and they were reunited on Amy's chest, Jonah suddenly improved. Caleb was taken to receive some breathing support, and Amy and Brett spent their precious time with Jonah making

"I don't want anyone to go through this horrible journey and not feel the love and support around them, like what we get from Very Special Kids."

him feel as loved as possible. Shortly after word came that Caleb was breathing independently, Jonah died peacefully – just 90 minutes after his birth.

"It's a one-of-a-kind organisation. They're amazing. They really are. Without Very Special Kids' support, we wouldn't be where we are today. And that's why we give back."

The family have access to a dedicated Family Support Practitioner to help them cope with life after the death of Jonah. They also attend family networking programs and events, access bereaved sibling support for Jonah's brothers and sisters and attended the bereaved parent weekend in May this year. Wanting to make sure that other families have access to the same support they received, the Greenlands have been phenomenal in raising thousands for Very Special Kids.

Amy connects with her son by lovingly making crafts, Jonah's Creations, and donates proceeds from each sale. The family also have a famous Christmas lights display, which Brett spends countless hours preparing. Their goal is to "impact one family with a story of hope" while raising funds for Very Special Kids.

Brett said, "We never know who's coming to see our lights display...it could be a family that is going through a journey that we've just been through. Our lights can bring a glimmer of hope to that family and say hey, there is light at the end of the tunnel...there's support, there's people and there's organisations like Very Special Kids that are here to travel that journey with you."

Community generosity supports our future

Our strength through the pandemic lies in the unwavering support from our community of big-hearted individuals, businesses and philanthropic funders who continued to offer their generous support throughout a challenging year when many of our events were impacted by ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support and flexibility from many Trusts and Foundations, as well as major donors who kindly untied funds so they could be allocated where they were needed most.

Despite extended periods of disruption to our longstanding program of events, the ability to move quickly enabled many of our events to run at later dates or adapt to digital formats where feasible.

The challenges of COVID-19 reinforced the need for Very Special Kids to diversify our income streams and provided us with an opportunity to review and refresh current fundraising programs and refocus our efforts on more sustainable sources of income such as Very Special Kids first ever matched giving day which exceeded all expectations by raising over \$420,000.

A LOTT OF VITAL FUNDS

We were thrilled to reignite a new partnership with Tabcorp (The Lott) in 2020, which launched with a generous donation of \$100,000.

Very Special Kids has a strong connection with The Lott, with Tatts being a major contributor to the building and running of our children's hospice in the 1980s. Tatts also supported the Piggy Bank Appeal and built our iconic giant piggy banks. The Lott Sponsorship and Community Manager, Hans de Koning, said he was pleased to be able to rekindle the long history with Very Special Kids: "Very Special Kids' incredible work is so important to the children and their families and it's heart-warming to be involved with this organisation again".

We are delighted to have The Lott's support in ensuring families have access to essential care and respite, and thank their customers and retailers for making this wonderful contribution possible.

VRC PARTNERSHIP ON TRACK!

The 2020 Lexus Melbourne Cup Carnival may have looked a little different without crowds, but it was nonetheless a great success for Very Special Kids as the Victoria Racing Club's (VRC) official charity partner.

Since 1995, the VRC's Pin & Win campaign has raised more than \$6.6 million for 15 charities through the sale of Lexus Melbourne Cup souvenir pins, helping to change lives and support the community.

In 2020, an incredible \$300,000 was raised through online pin sales, bringing the total to \$750,000 in two years of the partnership. This has made an enormous difference to our hospice rebuild project and to ensuring children with life-limiting illnesses, and their families, aren't alone in the moments they need support the most.

We are excited to be partnering with VRC for a third year, with the VRC aiming to reach more than \$1 million for Very Special Kids by the end of the 2021 Melbourne Cup Carnival.

OFFICEWORKS RALLIES THE COMMUNITY

Very Special Kids was delighted to be selected as one of 17 charities nationwide to be supported by the Officeworks Round Up to Make a Difference initiative.

Officeworks created this annual initiative to help make a positive difference to the communities where its team members live and work. It sees customers given the choice to 'round up' their purchase in-store or donate online to support the selected organisations.



Left: Our giant piggy bank Patrick visiting Officeworks

Far Left: Alannah and mum Caroline at the Flemington Racecourse

Below: Our team receiving the Lott cheque, Art with Heart Committee



With the support of their customers, these nine Officeworks stores across Victoria raised a phenomenal \$70,000 to support our vital work:

- Bourke St, Exhibition St, Russell St, Elizabeth St, Richmond, Yarraville, Altona North, Bendigo, Shepparton.

On top of encouraging their customers to 'give a little to change a lot', each of these Officeworks stores held a Family Fun Day during the June 2021 campaign, with extra fundraising activities including barbeques and raffles. Our volunteers and giant piggy bank trailer went along to the Yarraville and Altona North events.

"Connecting with the community is important to our team as we can make a positive impact on families in need from across our state." Paul Trewen, Officeworks Shepparton.

Thank you to Officeworks, their dedicated staff and customers for supporting Very Special Kids this year.

ART WITH HEART

The bubbles were flowing and auction paddles held high on a night where supporters came together for a common purpose, to raise funds for the children and families in our care and snap up a one of a kind artwork.

The exhibition and live auction featured exceptional artwork by leading contemporary artists including Jonny Niesche, Tim Maguire and Brook Andrew.

Along with other unique pieces of art, an incredible \$140,000 was raised.

Art with Heart would not be possible without the support of the committee, corporate sponsors and of course the contributing artists for their generosity and extraordinary pieces of art.

A special thank you to our MC Seb Costello, and to Very Special Mum Nancy for sharing her family's journey.

TAKING ON THE 24-HOUR CHALLENGE

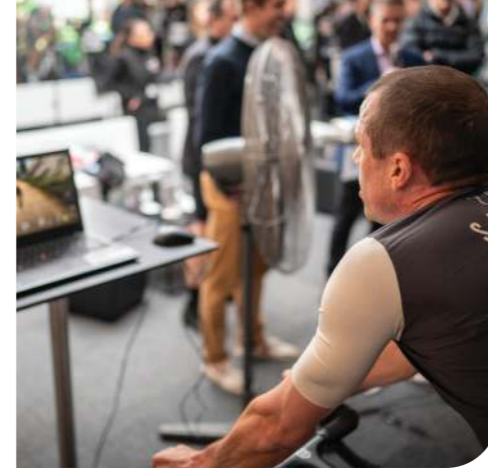
Our annual 24 Hour Challenge is well known for being a fun, fitness challenge for a fabulous cause. Over the years, the event has seen teams come together through the wee hours of the morning, ensuring our treadmills stay in motion for 24-hours, while they raise funds for children in 24-hour care.

In its 10th year this year, the 24 Hour Challenge had something for everyone with teams signing up to participate either virtually, or keeping the treadmills going at our onsite event.



Left: The Team at BodyFit

Right: Simon Gerrans at the Autumn Classic event



MAKING AN IMPACT BEYOND A LIFETIME

We are humbled by, and truly grateful for, the kindness of the bequestors who left a combined \$3.726m to Very Special Kids in 2020-21. Now more than ever we are so grateful for individuals who have generously planned or have left a gift in their Wills for Very Special Kids.

It gives us the power to plan and fund new projects that arise now and in the future to better support children and families.

By remembering Very Special Kids in your Will, you will help ensure many more children with a life-limiting illness enjoy the best quality of life and are able to create memories and moments of happiness that their families will cherish long after their death. With the help of your generous legacy, Very Special Kids will be able to reach out to families right across the state, using the fruits of your longer life to fill the shorter lives of generations of severely ill children with as much magic and happiness as possible.

Despite restrictions preventing the onsite event going ahead, our dedicated teams swiftly turned their activities virtual, raising over \$700,000! We were thrilled to see participants completing the challenge in their local areas, and rallying their networks to raise more than a sweat for Very Special Kids.

The cancellation of the face-to-face event didn't impact the BodyFit Training (BFT) team, who had planned to participate virtually so that all their studios could be involved. The BFT team challenged themselves to ride 15,603km, the distance between their furthest studio in Fort Lauderdale, USA, and Melbourne. The team were excited to have raised an incredible \$66,000 and already have their eyes set on "smashing that figure out of the park" next year!

RECORD BREAKING CYCLING

The Autumn Classic returned this year with a bang, breaking its own fundraising record with an incredible \$230,000 raised!

Fourteen teams took on six tough virtual courses, all vying to take home the perpetual cup and bragging rights. The competition was fierce and atmosphere electric as riders gave it their all, cheered on by teammates and heckled by competitors. Even more sought after was the highest fundraising team award, which was taken out by the Bayside Spiders who in their first year participating raised over \$32,000 – a sensational effort.

We were joined by cycling royalty, Simon Gerrans, who relished the friendly competition and even auctioned off his old Tour de France race numbers to help the fundraising efforts.

We are thrilled to see the Autumn Classic grow year on year and are excited to see what next year brings!



MARGARET TUTTON

The Tutton family are known for their service and community spirit, and Margaret Tutton exemplified this in her work as a trained nursing sister. She supported Very Special Kids from 1998, in the early days of our organisation. The connection was simple – Margaret and her sister Betty would park near the hospice when visiting a friend and agreed that whoever was last alive should make generous provision for Very Special Kids. We are blessed that Margaret, who passed away in 2010, left a significant gift in the form of a portfolio of shares, worth almost \$3.5million when transferred to Very Special Kids in April 2021.

Margaret requested that these shares were not to be sold for general operational funding, but should be invested and used for a special purpose. Therefore, Very Special Kids has set these funds aside for use in the future, giving us important confidence that we can support the ongoing needs of Victorian children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

You are **amazing**

750

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

358

FUNDRAISING AND ADMINISTRATION VOLUNTEERS

392

FAMILY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS (341 METRO MELBOURNE, 51 REGIONAL VICTORIA)

93

NEW FAMILY VOLUNTEERS COMPLETED 4 FAMILY VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAMS

Our Valued Volunteers

Very Special Kids can only offer the breadth of services we do thanks to generous support from volunteers, ambassadors, advocates, committee members and in-kind supporters.

We're constantly amazed and humbled by the commitment, care and creativity shown by our volunteers who make such a positive difference to the children and families we care for.

During a challenging year for the entire volunteer sector, we're proud to have achieved a great deal, including:

- moving to online volunteer information sessions and training
- continuing to recruit new volunteers
- restarting our family support programs in the hospice and in homes, around lockdowns.

We saw 93 volunteers complete their volunteer training, with regional volunteers able to access online training much faster than the usual in-person approach. The necessity for online activities sparked some incredible creativity by our volunteers, who had fun trialling various online programs with children and their families including online Lego Masters, trivia, Zumba and Pilates.

Our volunteers inspire us every day and we can't thank them enough for their unwavering support.



MEET SUPER SALLY

Sally is one of those incredible people who just gets things done, and we have been blessed to have her volunteering at the hospice for the past eight years.

"When I retired, I thought, how do I give back? I knew what it was like to be a nurse and how difficult it is to get everything done in a day, and that an extra pair of hands would be helpful."

Before retiring, Sally was a paediatric nurse at Monash Children's Hospital along with in-home respite to help mums with premature babies. This wealth of experience gave Sally the confidence to jump in and help with just about anything, so it's no wonder the hospice staff are always thrilled to see Sally!

What does a volunteering shift look like for Sally? "I'm a morning person so I take the early morning shift once or twice a week for 2-3 hours and help get the kids out of bed and dressed."

Volunteers at the hospice take on different tasks depending on what they enjoy and what needs to be done. Sally says, "Some people like to sit with the kids and read a book. Some like to take them for a walk around the block. I like the hands-on care - I'm happy to help with baths and dressing and feeding."

"It's highly rewarding... just a smile can make your day. I take away more than I give, I'm sure."

Sally enjoys the relationships with the hospice staff too and has made some good friends there over time. She says, "It takes a very special person to work with disabilities full time - I think they are amazing and hats off to them."

Unable to volunteer during the pandemic, Sally hoped she can resume volunteering at our temporary facility at Monash Children's Hospital and eventually at the new hospice in Malvern. "As wonderful as the old hospice was, I think the new setting will be amazing and I'm hoping that I can put in a few hours there!"



JANE'S MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Jane Ansell received her 25-year volunteer service award and we couldn't be more grateful for her ongoing commitment to Very Special Kids.

I first heard about Very Special Kids from a friend who mentioned an information evening about volunteering.

I had been thinking of doing some type of voluntary work but wasn't sure what. That night, what was being offered was really interesting, as there were a variety of areas you could choose from. I put my name down that night.

I had thought I would like to be with a family but nothing came up for quite a while, and I was offered a place on the hospital team at The Royal Children's Hospital. That is where I stayed for 16 years. It was a wonderful experience and a privilege to be with some families at very difficult times in their lives.

It was also a lot of fun getting to know children over many years and see them grow up and be so resilient and enjoy their lives even when living with so many medical issues and hospital stays.

It was also good to be there for the parents, so they have someone other than medical staff to talk to and release some of their thoughts and concerns.

This experience will always stand out as the most rewarding time as a volunteer as some days you left the hospital knowing you had made a difference supporting a family.

Receiving this 25-year service award is much appreciated, but not something I expected after all these years of doing something I have really loved. It is very true that volunteering in such a caring and supportive environment gives you so much more than you could ever give back.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

We are extremely grateful to all our volunteers for their dedication and compassion towards Very Special Kids and the children and families in our care.

A special thank you to the following individuals who have reached these incredible volunteering milestones:

25 years

JANE ANSELL

20 years

HEATHER HARDIMAN
JOAN FOLEY
GRANT SMITH

15 years

JO MOONEY
MARGARET
SCHOONEVELDT
AMANDA SPRINGER

10 years

BEVERLY JENNINGS
HEIDI ROBERTS
WENDY THORPE
CAROLINE BIRD
AMAN BILLING

RUTH GOULD
EUNICE MACLEAN
MARGARET JACKSON
MARIA CONSTANTINOU

5 years

PRASHANTI
RAJENDRAM
GENEVIEVE CLEARY
REBECCA LI
PETER LE
BEVERLEY
DERBYSHIRE

LORRAINE MCKENZIE
NEVILLE AZZOPARDI
ADRIANNE HOPPER
ANNE CLYDESDALE
JUSTIN WHITFORD
LORETTA SCHMIDT
AMANDA GOSPER

Our Generous Supporters

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Advent Partners
ALH Group
Balcon Group
Body Fit Training
Boongalla Group
Chadstone Toyota
CMV Foundation
Commonwealth Bank Of Australia
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Dandenong Club
Ernst & Young
Essendon Football Club,
Windy Hill Venue
Guild Group
Hippo Blue
Honan
Icon Group
JBWere
Jellis Craig Foundation
Lowe Living
Microfocus
Myzone
PFG Australia
Rose Grange Investments Pty Ltd
SEDA Group
Shamrock Civil
Simply Energy
Styletica
SureCare Safety Rails Australia
Tabcorp Holdings
Toyota - SRO
Tsv Financial Group Pty Ltd
Turi Foods
Victoria Racing Club
Viva Energy Australia

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Andrew Fox
Andrew Wallace-Barnett
Angela Found
Barry and Susan Peake
Brett Webb
Brooke Starbuck
Cathie Reid and Stuart Giles
Chris Garnaut
Christie Marsh
Claudine Revere

Clive and Jenny Batrouney
Damian Degenhardt
Daryl Holmes
David Lloyd
Doug Evans
Evan Dwyer
Goldsmith Family
Grace Scoleri
Hamish Rotstein
Ian and Kristeen Urquhart
Jack Gance
Jan Pannam
John Anthony Martin
Judy Greig
Lisa Holmes
Lynette Swan
Margaret Brown
Meaghan Heckenberg
Meredith Evans
Narayan Sreenivasan
Peter Kempen
Rita Andre
Robert Ralph
Sharon Landy
Simon Daish
Simon McNamara
Skye Abraham
Sophie Crowe
The Hon. Jenny Mikakos
The Hon. Michael O'Brien

GOVERNMENT

Federal Government of Australia
State Government of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria - Melbourne

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

Alfred and Jean Dickson Foundation
Australian Communities Fund (Henkell and Hopetoun Foundation)
Barr Family Foundation
Blanch Brooke Hutchings Estate
Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation
Campbell Foundation
Carleton Family Charitable Trust

Cassandra Gantner Foundation
Corio Foundation
Crown Resorts Foundation
DGP Foundation
Dorman Family Foundation
Eirene Lucas Foundation
Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood
Hinds-Martin Charitable Trust
Johnstone Family Foundation
The Morris Family Trust
Norman, Mavis and Graeme Waters Perpetual Charitable Trust
Packer Family Foundation
Percy Baxter Charitable Trust
Pethard Tarax Charitable Trust
Rado Family Foundation
Rowe Family Foundation
Sunraysia Foundation
The Marian and E H Flack Trust
The William Angliss (Victoria) Charitable Fund

ESTATES AND BEQUESTS

Estate of Delina Victoria Schembri-Hardy
Estate of Gregory Flynn
Estate of June Venecia Mary Collins
Estate of Margaret Joan Titulaer
Estate of Marion Isabel Jennings
Estate of Margaret Littledale Tutton
Estate of Mary Crowther

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

Bayside Spiders
Elwood Bathers
Grupetto
Keilor East RSL
LeMond
Lowe Finance
Malvern Xmas Trees
OTR
Rotary Club of Altona City
Rotary Club of Werribee

SkyBus
Spiders
Supersonic Jett
Team Seb and Charlie
The Flinders Challenge
TORO
Trivelo

ALH GROUP VENUES

Mac's Hotel
Manningham Hotel
Seaford Hotel
Tudor Inn

HOSPICE REBUILD SUPPORTERS

Andrew and Annie Bell
Andrew Penn
Bruce Parncutt AO
Chain Reaction Challenge Foundation
Christine and Terry Campbell AO
Craig Kimberley OAM and Connie Kimberley
D'Lan Davidson
Elizabeth Carew-Reid OAM
Fox Family Foundation
Gandel Foundation
Gaudry Foundation
Geoff and Lesley Freeman
Glenn Carmody
Helen and Brian Blythe
Jack and Meg Bowen
Jenny and John Fast
John and Anna Dawson
John T Reid Charitable Trusts
Ken and Gail Roche
Kristeen and Ian Urquhart
MacKenzie Family Foundation
Margot and John Rogers AM
Michael Heine Family Foundation
Neville and Evelyn Azzopardi
Norman and Pauline Bloom
Orloff Family Charitable Trust
P&S Bassat Foundation
Paul and Claire McCann
Peter and Rosemary Polson
Pierce Armstrong Trust
Robyn and Ross Wilson
Scheinberg Family

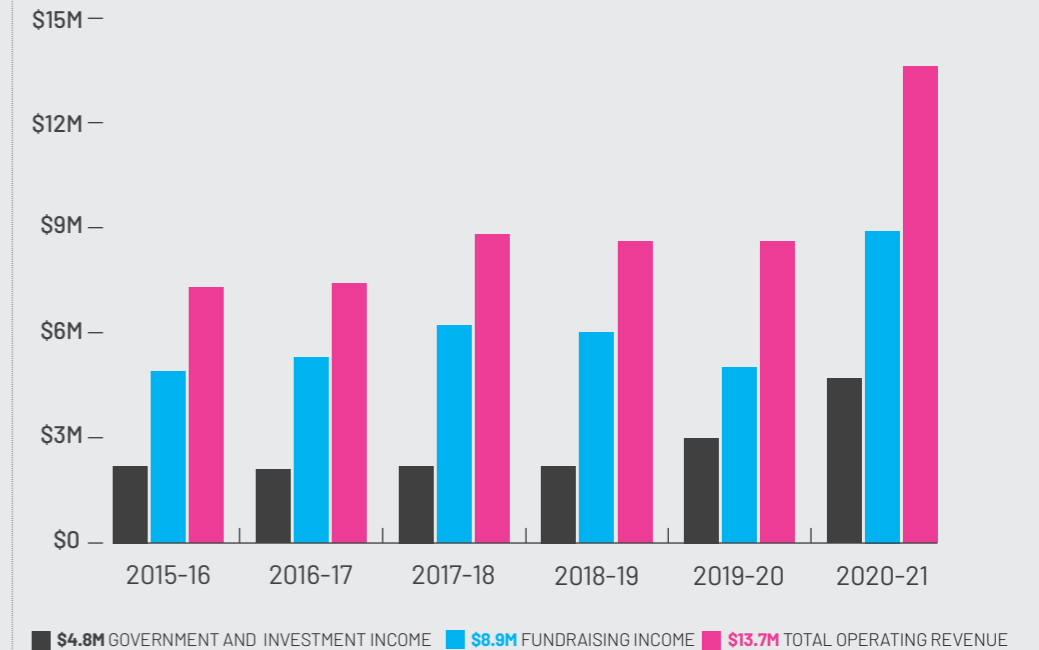
Sheehan-Birrell Foundation
Sue and Leigh Clifford AO
Susie Gibb
The Collie Foundation
The Highland Foundation
The Hon. Kelly O'Dwyer
Tony and Nathalie Johnson
Wendy Thorpe
Wolf Foundation

GIFT IN KIND SUPPORTERS

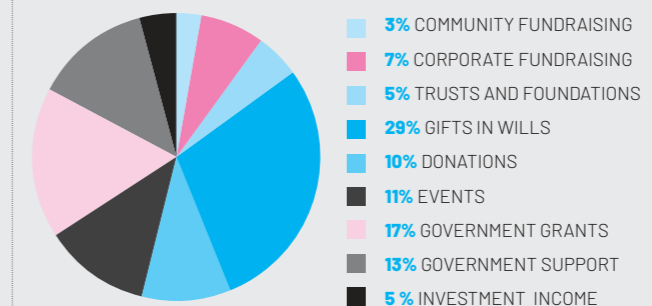
3AW Radio
Anthony Lister
ARA Property Services Pty Ltd
Benestar
Blackhawk Network
Lifestyle Platform
Bridged Group Pty Ltd
Brooke Andrew
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Elmo Talent Management
Software
Grassrootz
Griffiths Household
Joanna Lamb
Jonny Niesche
Julian Meagher
KPMG
Linfox Logistics
Lisa Roet
Lord Somers Camp and Power House
Matthew Johnson
Novofit
Optical Audio Productions
Penfold Motors Burwood
PFG Australia
Pinchapoo
Rich River Golf Club:
Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club
Woodlands Golf Club

*Supporters over \$5,000

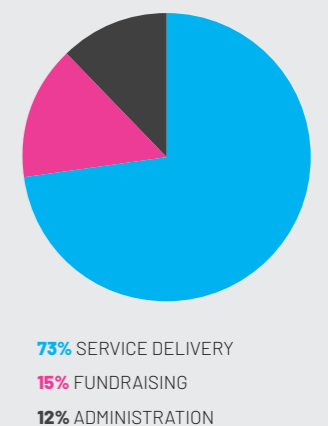
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021



WHERE OUR INCOME COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



As the uncertain financial landscape continued into 2020-21, we projected a significant deficit for the year. With the extension of the Federal Government's JobKeeper program and the continuing support of the Victorian community, we were able to exceed expectations, even though our ability to raise funds from large events and public programs remained challenging.

Strong results were achieved by engaging with our community in more innovative ways and we were grateful to receive significant corporate support across a number of fundraising initiatives. Furthermore, towards the end of the financial year, a substantial contribution was made in the form of an unforeseen bequest.

Our People

Our people are one of our greatest assets. Very Special Kids has over 100 employees, across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, dedicated to delivering on our mission. As a small organisation, we pride ourselves on fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. Our staff are spread across clinical, fundraising and events and administrative roles, and together we make up a unique, professional and caring team.

PATRON

SISTER MARGARET NOONE,
AM IBVM

BOARD

PETER POLSON (CHAIR)
LUKE BELL
DR SUSIE GIBB
RHYS JEWELL
HEIDI ROBERTS
THERESE ROBINSON
A/PROF ADAM SCHEINBERG
WENDY THORPE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Michael Wasley
Chief Executive Officer

Matt Dunshea
General Manager - Business and Finance

Angie Dredge
General Manager - Service Delivery and Improvement

Marcia Christmas
General Manager - Fundraising and Marketing

Katrina Hall
General Manager - People and Culture

Peggy Hogan
Family Support Team Manager

Sue Kearney
Hospice Manager

Sharon Stynes
Fundraising and Events Manager

Jane Baker
People Operations and Office Manager

FOUNDATION

The Foundation is a network of supporters who raise the profile of Very Special Kids and identify influential contacts and potential supporters. Its members are:

Glenn Carmody (Chair)
Michael Wasley
Neville Azzopardi
Phil Endersbee
Hamish Rotstein
David Gibbs
Claudia Haeger
Matthew Koce
Andrew Macmillan
Andrew Perry
David Szeleczy
Justin Whitford

LIFE GOVERNORS

Life governorship has been conferred on the following members without whose efforts Very Special Kids would not exist in its present form:

Mr Rod Bennett
Prof. Glenn Bowes
Ms Jane Fenton, AM
Mrs Paula Fox, AO
Mr David Jones, AO, OBE, KSJ
Ms Connie Kimberley
Mr Roger Nicholson OAM, (deceased)
Sr. Margaret Noone, AM IBVM
Mr Andrew Penn

LIFE MEMBERS

Life membership has been conferred on the following members who have given a substantial special contribution over a period of years and whose efforts have significantly affected the work of Very Special Kids:

David Agnew
Gary Anderson
Dr Elizabeth Carew-Reid, OAM
The Hon Peter Costello, AC
Robert Davey
Chris Gillman
Janet Hawkins, OAM
John Hope
David King
Professor Sharon Goldfield
Dr Doug Bryan
Bill Le Lievre (deceased)
Keera Le Lievre (deceased)
Andrew Miller
Jean Miller
Dr Annie Moulden, OAM
John Nairn
Maureen O'Keefe-Anders
Dr John Rogers, AM
Wendy Swift
Jim Wilson

You are inspirational

Very Special Kids welcomes people of all backgrounds and respects that the families we support are different in many ways including country of birth, ethnicity, culture, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion and ability. At Very Special Kids, we acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands across Victoria where our services are located. We also pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future.

Very Special Kids is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, accredited by The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and is a Child Safe Organisation. Very Special Kids is proud to display the Registered Charity Tick to highlight our Charitable status through The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions' Charity Register.

* This Annual Report has been printed courtesy of Courtney Colour.





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FLINDERS ROAD
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CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

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WESTERN DISTRICT

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WESTERN METRO

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