



Creating joy that lasts a lifetime

Annual review
2022-23



*“I wish for a rainbow
umbrella adventure”*

Roxy, 8,
Miller-Dieker lissencephaly

Make-A-Wish[®]
AUSTRALIA



“To help Batman catch the bad guys!”

Braxtyn, 10
Hunter syndrome

Contents

2	<u>Acknowledgement of country</u>	14-15	<u>Volunteers with impact</u>	31	<u>Building an inspirational brand</u>
4	<u>What we do</u>	16	<u>Recognising our volunteers</u>	32	<u>Smart technology</u>
5	<u>A message from our Chairman - John</u>	17-19	<u>How a wish impacts a community</u>	33	<u>Haidar’s wish to be a lion</u>
6	<u>A message from our CEO - Sally</u>	20-23	<u>Business partnerships</u>	34	<u>Financial overview</u>
7	<u>Our purpose and values</u>	24	<u>Charlie parties with Mickey</u>	35	<u>Acknowledgements</u>
8	<u>Strategic pillars</u>	25-26	<u>Philanthropy</u>	36	<u>Thank you</u>
9	<u>Exceptional wish journeys</u>	27	<u>Storytelling appeals & regular giving</u>	37	<u>Our board</u>
10-11	<u>Impact of wishes</u>	27	<u>Aroha’s spooktacular hallowish</u>		
12-13	<u>People and development</u>	29-30	<u>Community fundraising</u>		

Acknowledgement of country

In the spirit of reconciliation Make-A-Wish Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.





What we do

Unique. Inspiring. Extraordinary.

Each and every day, Make-A-Wish® Australia brings amazing people together to grant life-changing wishes for children with a critical illness.

Wishes are designed to complement medical treatment, supporting families and empowering sick children with hope and joy when they need it most.

And for everyone involved, wishes have a remarkable, uplifting and positive impact – well beyond the wish itself.



A message from our Chairman

After several years of uncertainty the 2023 financial year has thankfully been a more stable operating environment for most of our organisation, albeit not without its challenges and also opportunities. Again, everyone across our remarkable organisation came together to deliver a brilliant result on all measures.

Myself and the whole Board are so proud of the whole Make-A-Wish team, from our incredible volunteers, awesome staff, through to our exceptional partners and donors. The collaboration across all the various parts of the organisation has again been extraordinary and ultimately delivered an amazing 401 wishes to our wish children and families. I think the most incredible aspect of this achievement is that together, we have delivered so many wishes, whilst remaining true to our vision of creating exceptional experiences for all. As we look ahead, with the last of the COVID disruptions now almost behind us, our focus will be to continue to enhance both the experience and impact of our wishes.

As Sarah outlined in her Treasurer's report we are in a very strong financial position. It feels like the balance of driving partner contributions, innovation and other critical initiatives whilst being ever-vigilant managing of our cost base is in a good place again. Our relationships with our corporate and business partners have never been stronger and this is a credit to Sally and the team who have delivered on a clear strategy to drive this source of funds over the past year.

Sally and the leadership team have had another exceptional year. The unified relationship between the Board and the leadership team continues. Sally and the team have shown again this year an unwavering commitment to strengthening all aspects of our organisation including strategy, people, processes and systems and in particular have lead some great initiatives and improvements in how we deliver our wishes in an ever-changing and demanding environment. A sincere thank you Sally from everybody.

We have one change on the Board that is fast approaching in April when Dr Margaret Little will step down having completed her six year term. On behalf of the Board I want to thank Margaret for her unwavering support, input, guidance and commitment to Make-A-Wish. Margaret has been an instrumental Board member, providing sage medical advice to us all through the COVID years and has personally been deeply involved in fundraising through her participation in the Noosa Triathlon. Thank you so much Margaret. You'll be missed but we know your continued involvement will mean you're not far away.

And to the rest of our Board - thank you so much for giving up your precious time. You have all again shown resolute commitment and passion in supporting Sally and the Leadership team whilst overseeing the governance and strategic direction that now sees us in such a strong situation.

Our brand has never been stronger, we have sensational people across the whole organisation, we have stronger and more reliable infrastructure to really take our charity to the next level with so many exciting opportunities in the year ahead.

Thank you.



John Armstrong

A message from our CEO

Dear Everyone,

As we reflect on another year, it's hard not to be moved by the incredible support we've received from the community.

For over 38 years, Make-A-Wish has been creating joy that lasts a lifetime for critically ill children. We never lose sight though, that it takes the community coming together to make these wishes possible and ensure the wish experiences we create are so special. In a year where we've received record wish applications, we've been so pleased to have the capacity to support over 900 kids on their Wish Journey - one of our largest-ever programs. In all, 401 wish kids celebrated their Wish Day during 2022-23. Yet again, we've been amazed by the creativity and imagination shown by these kids. It really is our privilege to share with you just some of the extraordinary moments created within this report.

As usual, our amazing volunteers have done an incredible job supporting both our wish and fundraising programs. Through their unwavering support, we've seen more than \$2M raised in local communities. I'd like to thank everyone who has played a role in the success of these fundraising events and, of course, all those who donated to Make-A-Wish at these events. I'd also like to thank the generous supporters who have donated to Make-A-Wish through our regular giving and appeal programs. Your vital ongoing support makes a world of difference to the impact we can have.

Our business and foundation partners have been truly outstanding this year. The Hungry Jack's Wishmaker campaign achieved record results and is now the most successful fundraising event in our history, raising an incredible \$2M. We thank the team at Hungry Jack's for their amazing commitment to our cause. We also recognise the fantastic long-term support of Blooms The Chemist, Barry Plant, Disney, Hyundai Help for Kids, Hertz, Sass & Bide, Seed Heritage, Tarocash, oOh! Media and Southern Cross Austereo. We are so pleased to have you as part of our Wish Force. We are also thankful to the Stan Perron Foundation, John James Foundation and Perth Telethon for the belief they've shown in our programs and their ongoing support.

Finally, I'd also like to recognise those incredibly special people who chose to leave a bequest to Make-A-Wish. Gifts of this nature are truly transformative for the organisation, and we have been blessed to be the recipients of considerable generosity this year. We acknowledge and recognise these individuals for the lasting impact this will have and the everlasting joy this will create.

As always, I'd like to thank the Board and Chair John Armstrong for his wonderful ongoing support. And, of course, the Make-A-Wish HQ team and our 800+ volunteers around Australia who make up our Wish Force - without you, wishes just simply wouldn't be possible.

I look forward to what we can achieve together in the year ahead, as we continue to empower wish kids to think big and support them to experience a life lived to the fullest.

My best wishes



Sally Bateman

Our purpose and values

Make-A-Wish® Australia exists to create inspirational, life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. Our vision is to grant the wish of every eligible child.

In everything we do, we uphold our values of:

- **Child Focus:** We always put wish children first.
- **Integrity:** We are honest, transparent and respectful.
- **Impact:** We deliver life-changing work.
- **Innovation:** We are bold, imaginative and creative.
- **Community:** We are a diverse group of people working together towards a common goal.



Child Focus



Integrity



Impact



Innovation

Make-A-Wish®
AUSTRALIA



Community



Exceptional
Wish Journeys



People &
development



Volunteers
with impact



Financial
stability



Smart
technology

Strategic pillars

Make-A-Wish Australia works diligently to create exceptional experiences for children with life-threatening illnesses through our five strategic pillars.

The first pillar, **Exceptional Wish Journeys**, focuses on creating unforgettable and life-changing wish experiences for children and their families. **Volunteers with Impact** is about engaging and supporting volunteers to create meaningful and lasting relationships. The third pillar, **People and Development**, aims to create a positive culture that encourages and motivates employees. **Financial Stability** involves developing a financially responsible and sustainable organisation. Finally, **Smart Technology**, is about leveraging technology to enhance our organisation's capacity to deliver quality experiences.

We work hard to ensure these five strategic pillars are fulfilled in order to create inspirational Wish Journeys for children and their families.



Exceptional wish journeys



In 2022/23, we set out to grant 360 exceptional wishes, a 20% increase on the previous year. We are pleased to share that with the support of our Wish Force, we granted 401 wishes. We enjoyed fewer COVID disruptions to our wish program, allowing our wish children and their families to experience **the joy a wish brings**.

At the start of 2022, 852 children were on a Wish Journey. This increased to 903 children at the end of 2022/23. We supported over 100 illnesses and accepted 707 wish applications (+35% on the previous year). And for children under three years of age, we granted 23 wish hampers.

In 2023/24, a new application and onboarding process will be launched that will improve the experience for those who refer wish children to Make-A-Wish. **This will support children to commence their Wish Journey faster and complement their medical treatment earlier, to bring hope and joy when they need it most.**

Our successful model of **Virtual Volunteering** supported families and wish children who prefer an online experience. We will see growth

in 2023/24 as we embark on future recruitment in this area of volunteering.

Our **MyWish app** was launched following its successful trial. The immersive app is designed to help children better understand their emotions and strengths, sparking imagination and creativity while on their Wish Journeys.

We're excited to embark on the next phase of development, where we will be joining our main character Wishy on an exciting journey through the stages of wish exploration alongside our wish kids. Our upcoming plans include **enhancing the interactive experience** by gamifying the stages and questions, and guiding children through the process of ideation, to help them discover their **one true wish**. We look forward to seeing the continued progress in the app bringing even more imagination and creativity to the Wish Journey.

[Click to play our 2023 Highlight Reel](#)



401 wishes delivered throughout the year

903 children currently on their Wish Journey

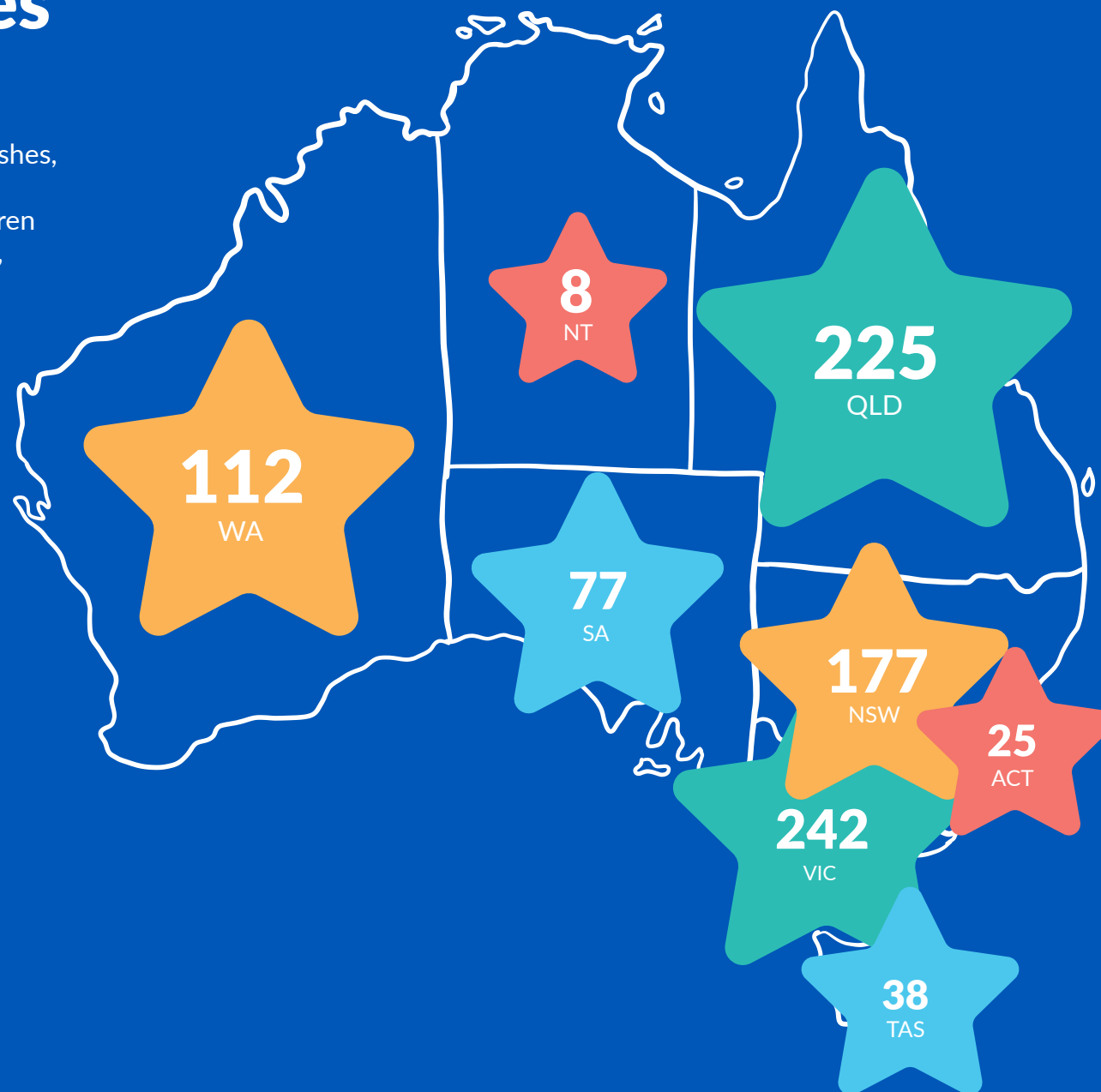
707 applications for a wish (+35% on last year)

23 wish hampers granted as part of our program which supports critically ill children under 3 years of age.

3 wish assists Coordinating wishes for children travelling to Australia for their wish from Make-A-Wish affiliates across the world

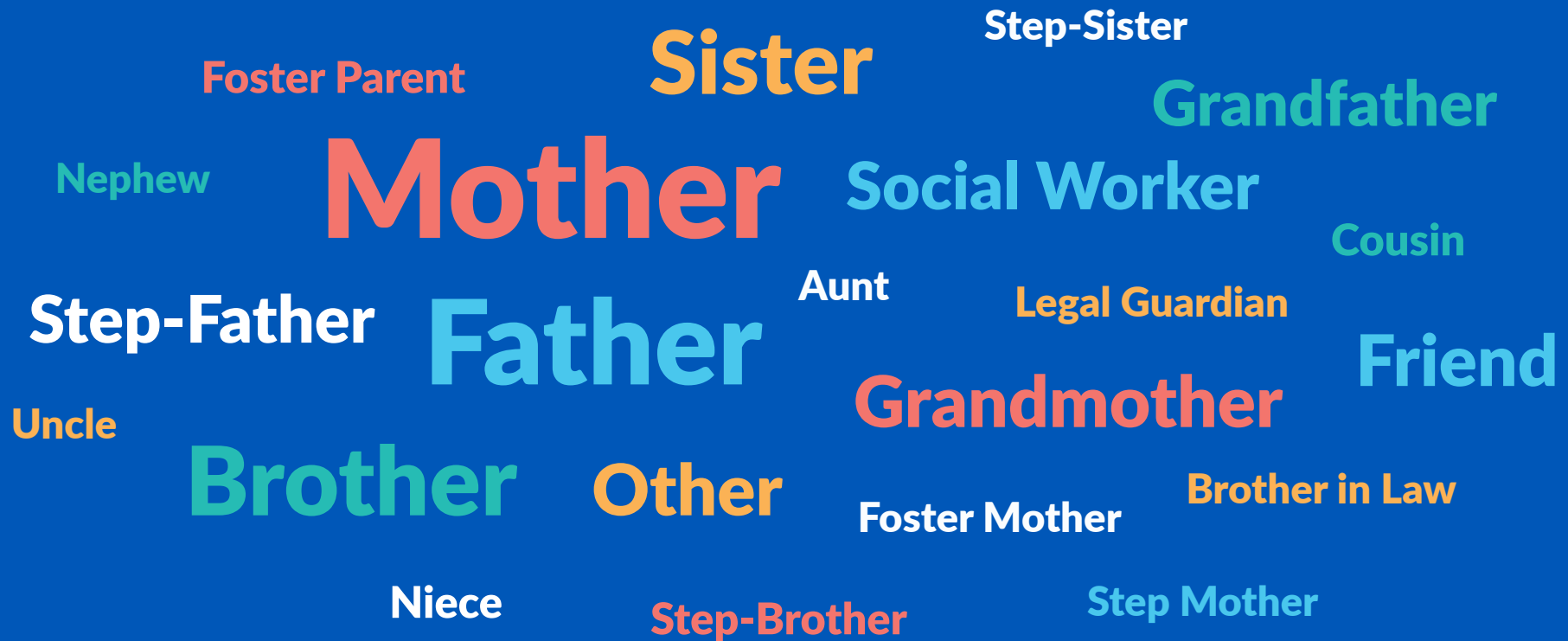
Impact of wishes

In 22/23 we delivered 401 exceptional wishes, whilst actively supporting 1,224 children who faced a critical illness. Our wish children are found in communities across Australia, representing 588 postcodes.



Impact of wishes

Wishes bring people together, and transform the lives of sick kids, their families and communities. On average, each wish directly impacts at least seven people within the wish child's community, bringing more hope and joy to those who need it most.



People and development

IECL partnership:

We were delighted to partner with the **Institute of Executive Coaching and Leadership** (IECL) to provide a coaching program for Make-A-Wish HQ staff and volunteer branch leaders to make ‘the biggest impact together’.

The program ran over a 6-month period with 94 people participating, and resulted in overwhelmingly positive feedback, including increased confidence, performance and wellbeing.

Thank you to the IECL and coaches who volunteered their time as part of the program.

“[My coach] created a safe and open space to discuss my professional challenges without judgement and celebrated the wins along the way.”
Testimonial from participant

Diversity, Wellbeing and Inclusion

Make-A-Wish Australia is committed to developing a diverse, welcoming, and truly inclusive workplace and community for all. We do so by valuing, celebrating, and embracing our differences, by ensuring that we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that we do.

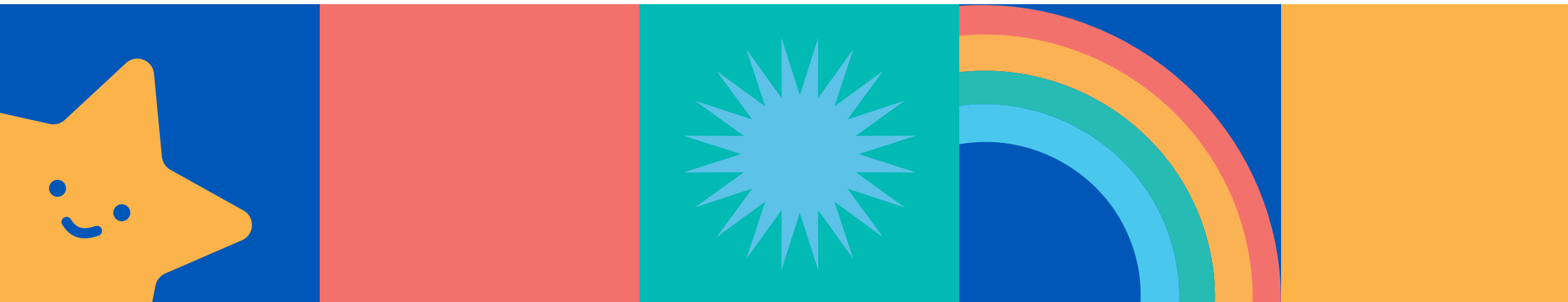
Our ‘Inside Out’ Committee was brought together to make sure diversity, wellbeing and inclusion is understood, considered and proactively practised across all areas of our organisation, to ensure Make-A-Wish is accessible to all.



People & development (cont.)

Some highlights achieved include:

- Developed the **Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Charter**
- Reviewed all our policies to ensure they support our charter
- Curated 6 Inside Out staff newsletters, with over 300 newsletter views
- Hosted staff 'Explore' sessions
- Improved the inclusivity of our email signatures by introducing the option to include pro-nouns, the charter, and an Acknowledgement of Country statement
- Opened our new Melbourne (Naarm) office with a Welcome to Country, added an Acknowledgement of Country to our website, developed resources to help staff give an acknowledgement of country at the start of meetings, and began work on our first Reconciliation Action Plan.



Volunteers with impact

We're incredibly fortunate to have a national network of over **850 volunteers** in our Wish Force, including 230 new volunteers who joined throughout the year.

These amazing individuals continued to **inspire** us with their **dedication and commitment** to supporting wish children and their families across Australia as we transitioned and adapted to a post-COVID world.

In 22/23, our key focus was to ensure our volunteers remained engaged, informed and were able to participate in a variety of ways. We were thrilled to see these sentiments reflected in our **2023 Volunteer Engagement Pulse Survey** as seen in the highlights below.

Improving volunteer communication was also a focus and we were pleased to introduce a number of successful new initiatives including:

- **Wish Connect** - a monthly newsletter containing news, updates and wish stories from HQ
- **Spotlight on Volunteers** - a monthly newsletter highlighting volunteer milestones, achievements and stories
- **Presidents/VPs update** - a weekly update with need-to-know information in a quick and easy to read format

Supporting and developing our branch leaders was another key priority for 2023. The **Institute of Executive Coaching and Leadership (IECL)** coaching program saw 27 volunteers participating, and resulted in overwhelmingly positive feedback.

This year, we also laid the groundwork for several upcoming projects including an updated onboarding, induction and training program for new volunteers, improving compliance for our existing volunteers, and establishing the **Volunteer Representative Council (VRC)** to ensure volunteer voices are heard.



Volunteers with impact (cont.)

Key stats from the 2023 Volunteer Engagement Pulse Survey

99%

(+6%)

Make-A-Wish really allows us to make a positive difference

98%

(+1%)

I am proud to volunteer with Make-A-Wish

89%

(+ 8%)

Make-A-Wish keeps volunteers informed about what is happening

"I do a lot of Charity Work and Make-A-Wish is the MOST "HANDS ON" charity where you can really see the benefits of your contribution in the most meaningful and powerful way....and we get to pay our stories forward, which gives others so much joy and hope as well."

"The rewards are amazing, especially when a Wish Journey is nearing the end, and of course the realisation and beyond. The gratitude from the families is beyond anything you expect and consolidate why you volunteer in the first place."

Key volunteer stats

883

all
volunteers

230

new
volunteers
joined

Recognising our volunteers

Volunteer milestones to acknowledge

20 years
of service

- Lisa Dangerfield (22 Oct)
- Louise Borg (22 Oct)
- Ian Shaw (22 Dec)
- Julie Blasioli (23 Mar)
- Sharon Schofield (23 June)



Louise Borg

25 years
of service

- Marilyn Bergersen (23 Jan)
- Chris Tucker (23 April)
- Lisa Murray (23 May)



Chris Tucker

30 years
of service

- Robyn Moore (23 Feb)



Robyn Moore



Marilyn Bergersen

How a wish impacts a community

Our 360-story series focuses on showcasing the diverse groups of people that come together in different ways to make wishes possible. For each wish featured, we hear from all of the people involved along the wish journey - learning what role they played and their personal story of impact.



There's a special moment, in a day full of special moments, which wish mum Simone remembers.

Towards the start of daughter Roxy's rainbow umbrella wish, Roxy and her family were immersed in the wonderland of the 1000 rainbow umbrellas that make up the Rainbrella Project in Queensland. With their eyes mostly fixed upwards admiring the umbrellas, musician Paul Vercoe strummed his guitar and sang 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow'.

"I just looked at Roxy, and she had this huge, wonderful smile," Simone recalled.

"Then I looked at (Rainbrella artist) Sophy, and she was looking at Roxy, and it was too much. It was so emotional for it to all come together so perfectly. And Sophy just grabbed my hand; she just knew what to do. She really helped me, and she felt it, too. It was beautiful."

"There were some happy tears, it was really moving."

How a wish impacts a community (cont.)

“Whenever I see a rainbow, I’ll always think of Roxy and what her wish meant to not only her but to every person involved.”

- Sally, Wish Designer



“I walked away from the wish reveal in the park feeling joy-filled and kind of elated because we got to deliver some wonderful news to Roxy and her family that the wish is going to be granted.”

- Romany, Make-A-Wish volunteer



How a wish impacts a community (cont.)

“Roxy’s wish has impacted us in such a momentous way. It has really reminded us to stop and look around and really appreciate all the beauty in this world.”

- Dani, The Ginger Factory



“It’s very good for the soul. The memory is in my heart and my head, and that’s the most beautiful thing to carry with me.”

- Sophy, the artist

“It was a real privilege to be there. It makes me feel very proud.”


- Paul, guitarist



Business partnerships

We are proud to partner with many amazing organisations across Australia who help us create life-changing experiences for critically ill kids.

Hungry Jack's Wishmaker Month raised a whopping record of more than \$2 million to help grant life-changing wishes for critically ill kids. Across the four weeks, we saw an incredible show of support from Hungry Jack's customers, staff, suppliers, local community supporters, and our Wish Force who came together and purchased over 376,000 Wishmaker stars.



Bringing their total to over \$1.8 million overall, Major Partners, **Blooms The Chemist**, raised nearly **\$220,000 throughout the year** through their 100+ store network, as well as becoming **Matched Giving Day partner for World Wish Day** and raising over **\$60,000** through their annual golf day.

With the help of Official Partners, **Hyundai Help for Kids**, wish child Haidar experienced his wish to meet the Brisbane Lions, attracting **national media channel coverage**.

Seed Heritage's 5th year of their annual **Christmas wrapping campaign** raised nearly **\$77,000**, galvanising their entire store network in support.

In their 11th year of support, **sass & bide** chose to feature previous wish child Andrea across their **bespoke necklace campaign** with **Make-A-Wish** throughout November/December.

Business partnerships (cont.)

Barry Plant has supported since 2014. During **Wishtober** every Barry Plant office contributed an amount from the commission earned on every property sold in the month, with their Head Office also contributing to the cause, bringing in **\$80,000**.

Coles' card campaign across South Australia and Northern Territory raised **\$126,139** across 3 weeks of fundraising including Coles stores/employees running their own additional fundraising initiatives throughout the campaign. SA News covered a wish child's visit into the Coles store to say thanks!



Officeworks' Make A Difference campaign in support of Make-A-Wish raised over **\$96,000** throughout June. Make-A-Wish volunteers were heavily involved, particularly in Queensland and Tasmania, visiting local stores.

Tarocash raised over **\$220,000** throughout the year, continuing to engage their store staff network who ask for donations at POS across the country.

RAG HQ ran a **Wear It Blue fundraiser** in support of **World Wish Day** and profiled wish alumni, Owen for their Father's Day campaign in September.

Business partnerships (cont.)

Major Partners

Our Major Partners have continued to make outstanding contributions to making wishes come true for seriously ill children across Australia. We are sincerely grateful for your continued commitment, energy and passion for Make-A-Wish.



TAROCASH

Official Partners

Our Official Partners provide generous support and collaborate with Make-A-Wish to bring more wishes to life, making a life-changing difference to kids in their community.

- Austbrokers Countrywide
- Barry Plant
- Coles SA & NT
- digiDirect
- Hallmark
- Hertz
- Hotondo Homes
- Hyundai Help for Kids
- King Cotton
- Officeworks
- oOh! Media
- Petstock
- RE/MAX
- sass & bide
- Seed Heritage
- Special Children's Christmas Party
- The Walt Disney Company
- Wrights PR



"I wish to spend lots of time with animals."

Kyah, 6,
Neuroblastoma

Business partnerships (cont.)

Community Partners:

- Arnold Block Leibler
- BGIS
- ConXion
- DJ Creations
- Fibre HR
- Fortescue
- Frequent Flyer
- Hello Plumbing & Hello Electrical
- Headland Excavation
- Hilton
- Merlin International
- Montgomery Club
- On the Run
- PayPal
- Ritchie's
- Robert Half
- Roberts Real Estate
- Spantec
- Exedy
- The Langham
- Tony Isgrove's Paint & Decorate
- Hilton
- Vantage Fuels
- Wilson Homes
- Jacor Construction
- Porsche
- Fingermark Global
- Urban Rest



Charlie parties with Mickey



The only things that 7-year-old Charlie adores more than Mickey Mouse are his friends and family. So when it came time to choose his wish, Charlie followed Mickey's considerate nature and made sure it was an opportunity he could share with everyone: A party with Mickey and friends! Charlie's communication is limited due to brain damage from multiple strokes, as a result of heart surgeries. So when he began singing songs from the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse TV show, his family knew it was something special.

On the day of Charlie's wish, he received a birthday dance party at school with Mickey, along with all his friends and family. Including his big brother and sister, who have been by his side all his life. 'Charlie's Cheer Club', if you will.

When Mickey arrived, Charlie brought him to his classroom to meet his teacher and his friends. Together they enjoyed a super fun dance party, filled with smiles and giggles!

Charlie's mum, Melissa, says that Mickey has a special way of speaking with children, especially kids like Charlie.

"I was quite surprised meeting Mickey - he was just the perfect size for children. And the other thing I didn't realise is that Mickey

communicates in mime, which is an added bonus... His [Mickey's] ability to communicate and interact with disabled children was quite phenomenal because he doesn't talk and they don't need to talk either"

According to Mickey, 'All you need is a little bit of magic.' And Charlie's family couldn't agree more.

"The first highlight was Charlie's face when it first all happened - when he realised what was going on. There was that magical, breathtaking moment, which was a combination of him being shy, nervous, and extremely excited. You could see so many amazing emotions going through him."

Charlie loves his school friends, but illness often keeps him from his classes. So having time to spend celebrating with his mates was **especially meaningful**.

"It was an amazing opportunity! We keep looking over his photos - and this wish has been going for years, so he's had a couple of videos from Mickey and a plush doll that came a year ago... We're really grateful for it and we have some beautiful memories."

Thank you Disney for helping to bring Charlie's wish to life.



“I wish for a day playing my favourite games with my friends and family”

Leo, 7,
Burkitts lymphoma



Philanthropy

At Make-A-Wish, we understand the significance of meaningful connections with our valued individual supporters, foundations, and legacies. Our ability to make a positive impact is tied directly to the support we receive from you. Your generosity drives our mission to create inspirational, life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses. Thanks to your support, we can empower sick children with hope and joy when they need it most.

We want to thank the following estates, trusts, foundations, and major donors who have each made significant contributions this year.

List of Major Donors

- Ann & Leo Browne
- Stephen Sharp
- Barbara Cohen
- Cheryl Baer
- Nathan Kelley
- Maxine Bowness
- Jill Tilbury
- Yvonne Mee
- Chris Daly
- Roseanne Amarant
- Phil Hancock
- BJ & SG Prendergast
- Jae Woodward
- Olgica Vigovic
- We also acknowledge and send our sincere gratitude to those who have elected not to have their names published.

Trusts & Foundations

- TG & JM Matthews Foundation
- The Orloff Family Charitable Trust
- David Z Burger Foundation
- The Alfred & Jean Dickson Foundation
- State Trustees Queensland Community Foundation
- Annie Rose and Andrew Lazar Foundation
- Equity Trustees
- Datt Family Foundation
- Daly Family Foundation
- The Prance Family Trust Fund
- Peter Robert Bauer Memorial Fund
- Channel 7 Telethon Trust
- John James Foundation
- The Stan Perron Charitable Foundation
- Susie Walker Fund
- Leibovich Foundation
- Richardson Family Foundation
- Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation
- The NSW Association of Greeks from Constantinople and Asia Minor Inc
- Robert and Christine Henshall Foundation
- Hislop Family Foundation
- Allan Hare Family Foundation

Philanthropy (cont.)

Bequests

- Estate of the late Maurice Cutting
- Estate of the late Brian Joseph Hollingworth
- Estate of the late Edward John Willis
- Estate of the late Gwen Anderson
- Estate of the late Norma Lagnado
- Estate of the late Johannes Marinus Mass
- Estate of the late John Thoroughood
- Estate of the late Thelma B Veal
- Estate of the late Pauline Barbara Dobbins
- Estate of the late James Schreuder
- Estate of the late Michael Henry Donworth
- Estate of the late Kevin Doyle
- Estate of the late Joan McLeod
- Estate of the late Carmel Greer
- Estate of the late Mary Eveline Godridge
- Estate of the late Irene Martin
- Estate of the late Norma Curle
- Estate of the late Thomas Harris
- Estate of the late Roslyn Mary Asimus
- Estate of the late Douglas Raymond Haynes
- Estate of the late William George Whitney
- Estate of the late Lea Gleave
- Estate of the late Kathleen Carmel Lee
- Estate of the late William Finigan

“Jett has struggled a lot over the last few years, not just medically but mentally too trying to understand his diagnosis, always wondering what’s going to happen next. Knowing he was given a wish has literally been his reason to not give up. Seeing his smile and feeling his happiness on the day is something I will never forget and treasure forever.”

- Skye, Jett’s Mum

Jett, 15
Rasmussen Encephalitis



“I wish to go diving with sharks”

Natalia, 10,
Leukaemia

\$1.75 million was raised
through individual donations

\$3.8 million was raised
through monthly donations



“I wish to go on a jaw-dropping crocodile adventure”

Duke, 8,
Duchenne muscular dystrophy



Storytelling appeals and regular giving

Our gratitude goes out to our incredible community of donors, whose generosity and compassion have been the driving force behind bringing wishes to life.

The impact of your contributions is reflected in the heartwarming stories we have had the privilege to share throughout the year. From Natalia, who dreamed of diving with great white sharks, to Duke’s jaw-dropping crocodile adventure, and Bonnie’s wish for a special family Christmas together - your support has transformed children’s wishes into reality, delivering over **\$1.75 million in value**.

We extend a special acknowledgment to our dedicated Regular Donors, whose **monthly gifts of over \$3.8 million** provide a consistent and reliable source of funding. This sustained support allows our team to efficiently plan and execute the delivery of monthly wishes, **making a positive impact on the lives of sick children daily**. Your commitment to our Wish Force ensures that with each passing month, more wishes can come true.

Thank you for aligning with our vision to bring joy and hope to sick children at a time when they need it most. With your unwavering support, together, we can continue to create a world where every child’s wish becomes a reality.

Aroha's spooktacular hallowish

They say good things take time, and that couldn't be truer for Aroha.

The kind-hearted and generous 13-year-old spent a long time deciding on her one wish - and true to her thoughtful spirit, she realised her wish was to help other children like her have their wishes granted. Aroha also LOVES Halloween - and everything about it. So, she naturally wished for a **'Halloween Carnival fundraiser for Make-A-Wish'**.

"Seeing all the costumes and effort people had gone to was a highlight, everyone was in the spirit - it was amazing having all my family, friends, Make-A-Wish, VIPs, and community together to have fun and scares," says Aroha, "When Sally gave me back my boo pumpkin with the total of how much my fundraiser had raised, I was in shock - I couldn't sleep! Now, I'm excited to hear how all those wishes go!"

When asked what she wants to be when she's older, Aroha has a few options. She wants to be a writer, a coroner, a nurse, doctor, Zookeeper or of course - someone in the morgue. So, it's no surprise that her favourite book genre is crime thriller, and that her favourite activity (apart from the Saxophone) is scaring her siblings!

Aroha's mum, Emma, says **their whole family LOVES to scare each other**. In fact, it's not uncommon for a pumpkin head to be at the dinner table - or for someone to be playing a practical joke on another.

Aroha's name also means love in Māori, which is no surprise considering she has the hugest heart and has spent her 13 years always thinking of others.

"Aroha used to be the diabetic fasting child going to theatre, who would have made the whole ward morning tea and would walk around with a box of cupcakes for everyone," says Emma, "On the ward, she would always manage to find children that were struggling or needing a friend!"

From clowns and witches to guys and ghouls, the **local Perth community truly brought Aroha's evening to life**.

The incredible fundraiser with more than **1,700 guests** took over Adventure World on Saturday night. With everyone dressed in their best spooky attire, there was music, food, jump scares, and plenty of carnival rides for everyone to enjoy. From the moment Aroha stepped foot in her specially wrapped Hyundai car to take her to her wish, through to the incredible team at Adventure World and all the supporters in between - Aroha's fundraiser was made even more extraordinary through the support of our Wish Force.



"I wish to host a Halloween Carnival fundraiser for Make-A-Wish"

Aroha, 13
Acute
lymphoplasmic
leukaemia

Community fundraising

What a successful and exciting year it has been with an extraordinary number of people in the community coming together to raise funds to grant more wishes for our incredible wish kids.

Make-A-Wish hosted Stream For The Wishes again with gamers across Australia coming together online with their efforts generating over \$19,000 to support wish kids.

Our annual Ride For Wishes campaign saw over 400 people register to fundraise for Make-A-Wish collectively achieving over \$100,000 raised.



Casey Partners a long-term community partner of Make-A-Wish again hosted their annual golf day at Keysborough Golf Club raising an incredible \$40,000.

It was also amazing to see Air Adventures coming together again at their annual King Island Classic golf weekend which has raised over \$100,000 for Make-A-Wish since 2018.



Community fundraising (cont.)

We are also very grateful to our wonderful Wish Force of volunteers who hosted various fundraising events including our very spectacular and special gala events, held in Mildura, Hobart, Gold Coast and Sydney. We are extremely grateful for their commitment and dedication to hosting these activities, connecting communities and raising vital funds.



World Wish Day

World Wish Day is a day celebrated by Make-A-Wish globally to recognise the inspirational wishes granted and the communities that help them come true. In 2023, Make-A-Wish Australia launched our 'Wear It Blue to Make Wishes Come True' campaign for World Wish Day... and we were blown away by the response by the community. Thank you to our business partners, volunteers, donors, supporters, followers, family and friends who dressed in blue and got involved.

Building an inspirational brand

As one of Australia's most trusted children's charities, we are hugely grateful to our Wish Force who not only raise vital funds but also help us reach more people by sharing our stories and content. We are especially thankful to our wish families and wider Wish Force, who allow us to share their stories to show the lasting impact of our work.

In 2023, our partnership with Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) entered its second year. The in-kind support provided has allowed us to reach more people than ever before, playing a significant role in increasing awareness of and support for wishes in communities across Australia.

We were blown away by the exceptional support SCA gave across their networks for World Wish Day. Wish kids took over the airways of their Hit Network on 29 April, in addition to the full promotional support given in the lead up to the day, inspiring people to 'Wear It Blue' for Make-A-Wish.

oOh! Media continue to give exceptional support through their out-of-home advertising network, allowing us to reach supporters in their local communities.

Thanks to Wrights PR for their ongoing support, and to the many media outlets who shared inspirational stories of our Wish Force.

"I wish for a gentle horse to take to pony club and learn to ride again"

Bridgette, 12
Atypical Teratoid/
Rhabdoid Tumour



Our Digital Footprint

243,000 visitors to our website

140,000 connected with us through social

17m impressions of our social content



"I wish to be a puppy princess"

Harriet, 6
Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia

Smart technology

We continued to focus on ensuring we had the tools and systems in place to deliver our program of activities as efficiently and effectively as possible.

We upgraded the website to ensure a more seamless donation experience for funders and made enhancements to our major platforms to allow for more automation with the Wish Journey – making the experience easier for families.

Our work in technology continues to focus on building a safe and secure environment for the future. We are grateful to our generous partners Inlight, Two Moos, Nexon and Pracedo for their ongoing support and guidance as well as support from Tiarne Hawkins, and Dr Catherine Lopas in the areas of AI and data strategy.

[Click to play
Harriet's video](#)



Haidar's wish to be a lion

Haidar's wish was off to a roaring start, as this brave little lion joined his favourite footy team - The Brisbane Lions! Thanks to Hyundai Help for Kids and the Brisbane Lions, it was even bigger and better than expected!

Haidar loves everything about footy. He loves to watch, listen to and play footy. In fact, Haidar's mum Lauren says he watches old games and then goes outside to kick the footy and will start commentating on himself, using the language they use in the games he watches.

"The experience was unbelievable, and it honestly felt like we were in a dream, Brisbane Lions really went above and beyond and made us feel a part of the Lions' family, for Haidar he didn't stop smiling the whole time he was there. He was truly in his element," said Lauren.

Haidar means Lion in Arabic, so when Haidar was old enough to decide on his own footy team – the Brisbane Lions was an obvious option. Haidar was also referred to as a brave little lion as he went through treatments for his rare heart condition.

So, when it was time for his ultimate wish – it was an easy one for Haidar. He wanted to meet his favourite footy team – The Brisbane Lions. And he was as ready as ever. It was important for Haidar to see the Gabba for himself, after watching endless YouTube videos of the players there. He wanted to get to the Gabba, meet and train with his favourite players, watch the Lions play – and ideally run out on the ground with his brother.

Haidar was an honorary Lion for an entire week, taking part in the main training session – amping his team mates up and giving roaring-good match advice. He also joined his favourite player and team captain Lachie Neale as a special guest in his press conference.

This courageous 9-year-old was treated just like a player, watching the pre-warm up in the change rooms, taking part in the mascot experience, tossing the coin to kick off the big game, and of course leading the chant in the midst of the huddle after a big win!

Haidar's mum Lauren, says Haidar felt blessed after the experience. *"He said it makes him feel blessed and appreciates being born with a heart condition and having gone through his surgeries to be able to have had this opportunity... He's told me before, if he could choose to be born with a normal heart or half a heart, he'd still choose this heart because it makes him feel special and not like everyone else."*



"I wish to meet my favourite footy team - The Brisbane Lions"

Haidar, 9



**Click to play
Haidar's video**

Financial review

Make-A-Wish Australia recorded a **surplus of \$1.147 Million** in 2022-2023.

As expected, the organisation was on target to record a modest surplus, and in the last few weeks of the financial year, an exceptional and generous bequest of \$1M was received. As a result of this substantial gift, an operating surplus of \$1.131 Million was recorded. The final surplus amount was achieved with the inclusion of the modest unrealised gain on the investment portfolio.

Expenses increased largely in line with the increase in the number of wishes granted. This year **401 life-changing wishes were granted** with the help of our generous partners and supporters, and the inspirational dedication of our volunteers.

The organisation successfully navigated the impact of inflationary pressures placed on the program by:

- Continuing to be vigilant in the management of our cost base.
- The outstanding support and performance of Hungry Jack's Wishmaker Campaign, which raised in excess of \$2 Million, a 30% increase on the prior year.
- The generosity and long-term commitment of our partners and supporters.
- The continuing support of the community in supporting our fundraising efforts.

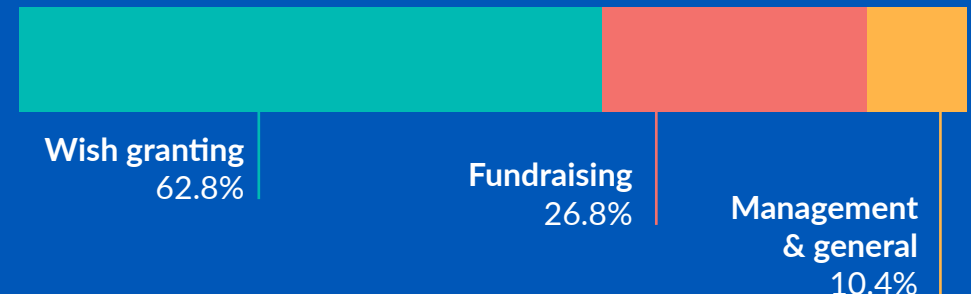
In the year ahead, the organisation will continue to diligently focus on **operational performance** to ensure that we're able to sustainably grow our life-changing wish program, and the amazing impact that it has on our community.

Key statistics

Where our money came from:



How we used it:





“I wish to have a 4th Birthday party at a Zoo or Petting Zoo!”

Rani, 4
Hypoxic brain injury

Acknowledgements

Every wish granted is as unique as the child who imagines it, but all wishes bring hope, joy and inspiration to families at a time when they need it most. We're grateful to everyone in the Wish Force for their unwavering belief in the impact of wishes and joining us on our mission to grant the wish of every eligible child.

From our volunteers to our donors, our partners and our ambassadors, you are helping to create extraordinary experiences that transform lives.

Thank you for helping us bring life-changing wishes to life.



“I wish to visit Candy Land with my twin brother”

Marcus (and his twin brother Jacob), 8
Wilms' tumour



“I wish to have an adventure day with Spider-Man”

Paula, 5,
Brain Cancer (Ependymoma)

Thank you

Our National Patrons



Melissa Doyle
National Patron



Robyn Moore
National Patron

Our Ambassadors

Mack Horton
Zac Mihajlovic
Fraser Ross

Our Wish Ambassadors

Owen Bowditch
Andrea Alzened
Hamish Nelson
Claude Nelson
Archie Schiller
Niamh Sullivan
Grace Favelle

Our board



Sally Bateman
Chief Executive Officer



John Armstrong
Chairman



Steve Billingham
Deputy Chairman



Sarah Saville
Treasurer & Chair of the
Finance & Audit Committee



Stephen Sharp
Board Director



Melinda Geertz
Board Member



Russell Evans
Board Member



Dr Margaret Little
MBBS, FRACP, PhD
Board Member



Amanda French
Volunteer Representative



Julie Blasioli
Volunteer Representative



Level 1, 4-12 Amsterdam Street
Richmond, VIC 3121
Australia

PO Box 5006, Burnley, VIC 3121
Australia

makeawish.org.au

enquiries@makeawish.org.au

1800 032 260

Find us on social media @makeawishaust

