

Country Hope Trust

To give relief when it matters most

NSWCFN 17801VICFR0016602ABN93 187 189 789

Annual Report 2022

"Childhood illness touches the lives of everyone in country communities..."

> 25 Blake Street | Wagga Wagga | NSW 2650 www.countryhope.com.au



CORPORATE SUMMARY

The Trustee for Country Hope Trust (trading as *Country Hope*) is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth) (ACNC Act).

Country Hope is registered as a public company (limited by guarantee) under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), and holds tax exemptions and concessions under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth).

Country Hope is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and is covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (DGR1 status).

OUR MISSION

To provide emotional and financial support to country families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or other life-threatening illnesses

OUR VISION

To give relief . . . when it matters most

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Message from the **Chairman**

Kerry Flinn

It is with great pleasure that I submit my annual Chairman's report for the 2022 year. Another difficult year with the tail-end of Covid and having to cancel our "Time Out For Life" camp once again and very limited fundraising.

Special thanks to the amazing Riverina Redneck Rally and those amazing people who instigated it and run it, Gavin and Tammy Gilbert. Country Hope would not be in the financial position they are in today without these two extraordinary people who give hundreds of hours of their precious time and the many people who help and support them to put this rally together. To date they have raised over two million dollars. What an amazing effort.

In financial terms we are in a very healthy position - even though our net profit was down on last year (\$329,523 from \$587,674). The net result for 2021 was greatly helped by a \$111,600 Job Keeper subsidy. Our eWrap Investment fund is also going quite well - up on last year! The Board made the decision to use some of our cash held in the bank (which was not earning much at all) and invest in two as-new units in Gobbagombalin which are rented and showing a much better return! The Board also made the decision to lease out our property on Union Road in Albury which is also showing a good return. We have relocated our office in Albury to a small shop in the City walk arcade and it is proving a good move giving much more exposure.

A big 'thank you 'to the following businesses, organisations, grants, and individuals for their generous donations: Beyond Bank, Baiada group, Sth Wagga Rotary, Wagga Picnic races, St Johns Wipers, Lions club of Griffith, Trowella Gardens, The Marian & E.H. Flack Trust, Wagga Market place, Catherine Gorrie, Mary Madden, Marion Way, and John & Shirly Lewis.



I would like to thank all our great staff, lead by Ellie Webb our General Manager for their dedication, hard work and commitment over the year. Ellie has been with us for 14 years now and continues to do a great job.

Taylah Hives has taken on the Family Liaison Officer role in Wagga, as well as administration with the help of volunteer Dawn Skidmore.

We would also like to welcome Simon Barton, our new Fundraising/Events Co-Ordinator to the team. Simon has been with Country Hope for six months now and is doing an exceptional job. Simon has been a great asset with his technology knowledge, saving us time and money. As Country Hope turn 20 next year, Simon has some great events planned.

Our Family Liaison Officer in Griffith, Bev Devery continues to support our families tirelessly.

Kristy McMahon, our Family Liaison Office in the Albury area who sourced, organised, and is running the shop in Albury. Kristy also organized our first "On Key for Kids" show in Albury which was an absolute success, raising over \$135,000.

I would also like to welcome Anne Lowe to the Board. Anne comes with exceptional experience and running high profile businesses and I'm sure she will be a huge asset to Country Hope. Welcome Anne.

In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their time, support, commitment, dedication in helping grow Country Hope to the great charity it is.

Message from the **General Manager**



Ellie Webb

Here at Country Hope, we have been working hard in all our areas to support country families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or other lifethreatening illnesses, giving relief...when it matters most.

We care deeply about our mission, our vision, our values and about making a difference to our Country Hope families.

We started the year with renewed hopefulness and positiveness, not sure the challenges we were facing yet again with COVID-19. Despite the uncertainty there was an unwavering commitment to the needs of our families. No one is immune to the difficult times families face. I am pleased that we were able to continue and deliver strong results in supporting our families financially and emotionally.

Thankfully, we were able to visit our families again in their homes and in hospital, giving much needed support when and where it was needed.

The Riverina Redneck Car Rally overachievers were once again our major contributor, helping us to grow and enabling us to continue to support our families and our mission and vision. I can't thank those guys enough...

Projects and programs were realised thanks to the support of the Marian & E.H. Flack Trust, the Wagga picnic races, the Wagga Marketplace, Essential energy, Thomas Bros, Tasco and CSU.

I would like to thank all our donors and partners for their generous continued support throughout the year.

Our wonderful "Time out for Life" children's holiday camp was cancelled again this year due to COVID, but we were able to hold two great fun days in the September school holidays. Thank you to the camp committee, buddies, volunteers and all who attended to make the days special and fun-packed for the families.

A very big thank you to our marvellous (new) teams in Albury and Dubbo for bringing great awareness about Country Hope and what we do to your areas and the wonderful job with fundraising! Well done...

Amazingly, Country Hope will be 20 years old next year. We are planning some great celebrations. We hope you will join us!

I have a great team behind me, thank you to the staff and the board of directors for your ongoing support. A warm welcome to new staff members and Anne our new director of the board.

Our Country Hope team is dedicated and determined to continue to provide the best financial and emotional support and value to our families.

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." Henry Ford

Merry Christmas and all the very best for the new Year



Ellie Webb

Country Hope Profile and History



In 2003, with a generous \$20,000 contribution by Mr. Brian and Mrs. Joy Kahlefeldt, Country Hope was formed.

Country Hope began with supporting thirty families. Today our number has grown to over 200 families in the Riverina and Murray regions, with family support centres in Wagga Wagga, Albury, Griffith, and Dubbo.

The purpose of the "Time Out for Life" children's annual holiday camp is to provide the diagnosed children and their siblings with something to look forward to and to create wonderful memories. This camp is a fun-filled week of respite and enjoyment that provides diagnosed children with an opportunity to take time out from the reality of their treatment, hospitalisation and everyday stresses associated with their medical condition. It also allows the kids to be just kids! The camp also provides much needed respite for parents with the certainty that their children are cared for by committed buddies and by trained medical staff.

At once the benefits of this special time away become evident. Seeing the smiles on the children's faces and the excitement shared in anticipation of meeting their new-found friends and buddies at the next camp contributes extraordinarily to a positive impact the camp has on the lives of the children.

It was quickly identified that an annual camp was simply not enough. It came to be obvious that country families had so many more pressures and additional needs when dealing with such life altering events compared to families residing nearer to the major paediatric hospitals in Sydney and Melbourne. It was decided that Country Hope would give more support to families in the way of emotional and financial support.



country hope

The Country Hope Logo is based on the needs of Country children, the importance of family, and on bringing brightness and Hope to the lives of the children who need it most.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2026

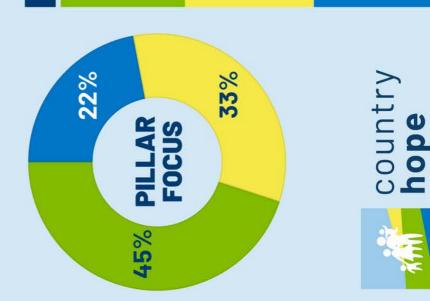
OUR VISION To give relief ... when it matters most

OUR MISSION

To provide emotional and financial support to country families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or other life-threatening illnesses

Passion Commitment Care

ntegrity



OUR PILLARS

RELIEF And

SUPPORT

SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMMENT

OUR GOALS & STRATEGIES

RESPOND QUICKLY TO CHILDREN'S AND FAMILIES' NEEDS

- Provide meaningful connections now and into the future
- Capitalise on the freedom to provide immediate relief
- Explore opportunities for alternative complementary online experiences

SUSTAIN OUR GROWTH WHILE BEING FLEXIBLE AND RESILIENT

- Establish forward thinking and sustainable financial outcomes
- Develop and maintain an effective governance structure and culture
- Build a strong and capable workforce and volunteer base

ADVOCATE AND COLLABORATE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

- Engage with stakeholders and networks to build brand recognition, creditability and identify future opportunities
 - Investigate and explore an advocacy role that can achieve realistic outcomes
- Align brand, communications, and marketing together to build and grow awareness



Bree's Story From camper . . . to buddy . . . to social worker

Bree was diagnosed with bone cancer when she was just 14. It all started with what they thought was just a persistent sports injury in my arm. When the pain refused to go away, Bree's parents thought it would be best to visit the doctor and get it checked out. The doctor's appointment was on a Friday. Bree was sent for an ultrasound and x-ray, and by the following Monday received the diagnosis.

The whole family was incredibly shocked and surprised to find out that this supposedly simple sports injury was actually cancer. The diagnosis came out of the blue – no one saw it coming. The family's, lives were turned upside down, having to adjust to a new type of normal.

Bree was sent to many different doctors in the country who referred her to a surgeon and oncologist in Melbourne. This geographical issue made things very tough for the family. They were always commuting back and forth between the city hospital in Melbourne and their hometown in the country for other tests, more results, and overnight stays. Mum and dad had to take time off work, Bree stopped going to school and her brother (who was doing his HSC) also stopped school for a while.

To help her brother get through his exams, Bree's parents would tag team between country and city. One of them would spend half the week with Bree and the other half with her brother. Then they'd swap, only seeing each other briefly in these moments. Bree started her treatment with 10 weeks of chemotherapy to shrink the tumour at the Royal Children's Hospital. She then had major reconstructive surgery on her arm, followed by more surgeries, including two more reconstructions where the tumour was. She then had 40 weeks of chemotherapy – that's nearly 11 months!

The treatment was very tough. Bree was always sick with high temperatures and nosebleeds. She would try to go home for the weekend but would find herself back in hospital. Bree finished her treatment on the 10/10/11.

Bree returned to school and began to start her life post cancer. Bree and her family were well supported by Country Hope. Bree loved attending the camps as a camper and meeting other children and young people who had been through a similar experience to herself. It felt like a family. Bree then became a Buddy and attended the camps having a camper of her own. Bree said, " this was so much fun where I was able to still go on camp but in a different way to before".

Bree went on to study a Bachelor of Social Work and completed that in 2017, then going on to study at Flinders University and The University of Melbourne for post graduate degrees. Bree now works in the cancer field as a social worker at Cancer Hub and just got engaged to be married.



Congratulations Bree, we wish you all the very best.



Our Support For the Families in our region

Financial

Country Hope supports the family financially by helping with mortgages, rent, food, utility bills, fuel, accommodation, education, and other rising costs of living.

Families are often running two households. Usually, mum stays with the diagnosed child in a hospital in the city, a long way from home, and dad is home with the siblings, juggling work, and getting the other children off to school or care.

Emotional

Country Hope also supports the family emotionally, providing counselling, organising group get-togethers, luncheons, and art and play therapy.

Travel & Accommodation

Travel and accommodation are very big expenses for families. Country Hope provides fuel cards when driving, book flights where necessary and arrange accommodation.

Time out for life holiday camp

Each year we hold a children's holiday camp for both diagnosed children and their siblings where we let kids just be kids.

The children mix with other children who are on or have been on a similar journey. The camp is packed full of fun and activities and great friendships are formed between the campers, buddy's, and volunteers.

Home and Hospital Visits

Our Family Liaison Officers visit the families in their homes and when in the hospital where possible, listening to them carefully and sympathetically making sure they are ok.

Family Holidays

We encourage the families to try to have a break when possible. We provide fuel, groceries and spending money so it costs the families nothing to have a holiday away from their stresses. Families rarely can afford a family holiday.



COUNTRY HOPE TRUST

ILLNESS JOURNEY

DIAGNOSED

A child is diagnosed, and the families lives are turned upside down.

The whole family feels the pain.

TREATMENT

Families are separated.

Feelings of guilt, anger, exhaustion.

Siblings feel left out.

COUNTRY HOPE

From the first until the last, Country Hope is there supporting the whole family.

PROVIDING RELIEF WHEN IT MATTER MOST

RELAPSE

Illness can return.

The journey starts all over again, sometimes worse than the first time. LOSS

Income, jobs, family as they knew it, education, time, energy and hope.

Sometimes loss of life.

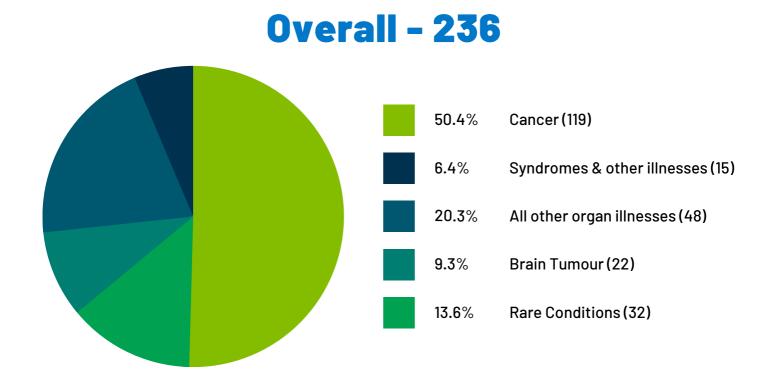
RECOVERY

Can take a long time.

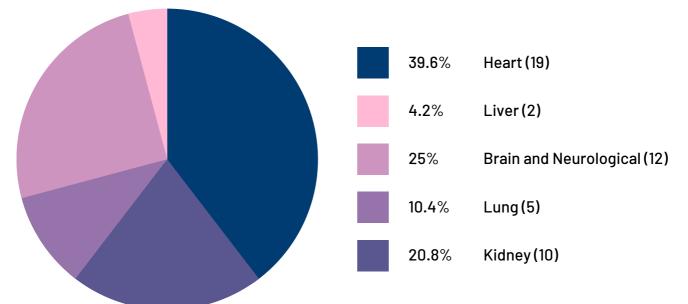
Hard to get back to normal (if they ever do)

Illnesses at a Glance

Categories of Life-Threatening Illnesses Presented over our nineteen Year History.







MEET BRAVE CODY



Cody has a rare type of kidney disease, which also results in seizures, brain infections and a whole bunch of other secondary life-threatening illnesses.

From birth it's been hectic for Cody and his family with doctor and specialist's appointments, including neurology, endocrinology, urologist, immunologist and kidney specialists - along with his paediatrician.

Most of Cody's medical appointments and treatments occur at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, which is 400km away from the Family Farm.

Last year, Cody underwent painful surgery to try and correct some of the effects of Rickets, which is a softening and weakening of the bones that results in delayed growth, bow legs, weakness and pain in the spine, pelvis and legs.

Amazingly, Cody is a happy, positive, cheeky little man always willing to make a new friend, like his "moo cow" Coco.

And, through all of this, Country Hope has been there for Cody and his Family. From travel and accommodation when attending appointments, to providing some fun family time with a visit to Luna Park.

Country Hope can't cure Cody, but we can reduce the stress to him and his family and Give relief ... when it matters most.







Family Liaison Report Wagga Wagga



Taylah Hives

I began working for Country Hope this year as the Administration Officer but as the Family Liaison Officer position arose, I accepted the opportunity to take on that role as well as continuing with the administration with the help of Dawn, a volunteer that comes in 2 days a week.

I am currently enrolled with TAFE to complete my Diploma in Counselling in Feb 2023, which will enhance my skills further and give Country Hope families an opportunity to express their emotions and feelings.

Country Hope's 2022 "Time Out for Life" children's holiday camp was unfortunately postponed again due to Covid-19.

Instead of completely calling off the event it was decided to hold Family Fun Days. This event was held over two days in the September school holidays at the Mater Dei Primary School.

Holding a 2-day event instead of an overnight event would be practical at this point, where parents and younger siblings could also attend but at the same time still monitor the Covid-19 rules that were in place. It was such great fun being able to see all the children with a big smile on their faces.

This year across all three areas we have had 13 new families register with Country Hope giving us the opportunity to support them financially & emotionally whilst being there for them while they go through their very tough journeys with a child with a life-threatening diagnosis and/or treatment. I have big plans for 2023 to re-engage with the families in person, outside of Zoom or phone calls. One of these plans is to connect with Creative hub Riverina to hold workshops for not only the children but also their parents. I have booked in a under 11-year-old beading workshop for the girls to attend in January, with all spots already filled, with potential of opening another date, with plenty more things to come.

I look forward to what 2023 has to offer for me and everyone I will be supporting in the Wagga Wagga region.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas full of love and joy!





Family Liaison Report **Albury**



Kristy McMahon

2022 has been a huge year in Country Hope's North-East Victoria and Border region. I began working for Country Hope in April. As the mother of a child diagnosed with cancer at the age of 8, I was already familiar with Country Hope's services, and a huge advocate for this wonderful organisation.

Country Hope's North-East and Border services were previously operated from a house in Lavington, which closed during Covid. In a first for Country Hope, we decided to open a shop and office in the Albury CBD. The Country Hope shop is stocked with handmade donated items and staffed by a team of amazing volunteers. The location has given us an opportunity to meet and talk to thousands of members of the public who would not otherwise know we exist.

We have recently secured a second space for our new Art Therapy program, thanks to a grant from The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust. In addition to buying art supplies, the grant allowed us to provide Art Therapy training to volunteers, who will help us deliver this service to our families well into the future. Art therapy isn't just for kids. We recently ran our first parent session, which was a wonderful way for parents to have some fun, share stories, provide advice and support to each other.

In July this year, we launched the inaugural "On Key for Kids" fundraising campaign, pairing 11 community members with vocal coaches who have been working together to raise money for our cause. On the 18th of November they compete for the title of Best Performance, Highest Fundraiser and People's Choice at a gala dinner and show at the SS&A in Albury. Albury Wodonga is home to an amazing and state-of-the-art Cancer Centre, and interestingly, many people in our community think children can be treated there. Unfortunately, this is not the case, with most seriously ill children needing to travel to Melbourne for life-saving treatment.

The Albury-Wodonga community is at present rallying for a new single-site hospital and Country Hope has joined the fight to ensure paediatric cancer services are not forgotten in the planning for this. In the meantime, we are advocating for support to access to existing regional services and telehealth where appropriate, to reduce the burden of travel on families.

We are currently supporting just over 20 families in this region, providing financial and emotional support, assistance to purchase medical equipment and providing opportunities for kids and their families to take some time out from treatment and enjoy life for a second. None of this could be achieved without our wonderful volunteers and support from the rest of the Country Hope team.



Family Liaison Report **Griffith**



Bev Devery

After a long year of managing our way through the Covid pandemic in 2021 and we approach moving out of lockdowns and travel restrictions with anticipation of returning to our normal lives with family & friends, work & education.

For our Country Hope diagnosed children & their families this will mean re-organising postponed Doctor's and Specialist appointments, hospital treatment, scans & tests to be done. Some children have continued their care plans throughout with no restriction, but with many safety protocols followed.

As Griffith Family Liaison Officer, talking to most families regularly was a priority by phone, text or email to reassure them we were still able to support them as needed. Frustration, anxiety & stress was a major factor in talking to the families, so listening & discussing their concerns was important, encouraging them to stay active physically when possible, taking time out for themselves & as a family together. The children mostly missed their friend's & struggled with home schooling routines.

Once again, our children & families have coped remarkably, stayed safe & excited to move on, they really are resilient & positive for their future.

We sent out Mother's Day & Father's Day gift cards to show them we acknowledge how appreciated they are, we received many thank you messages in return. In October we sent a surprise Gift Card to all our children too. Great excitement was reported back as they chose what they would get. Camp was again cancelled leaving children, buddies, staff, Doctors, Nurses & volunteers all disappointed. Camp Fun Day's also had to be postponed, we encouraged everyone to reach out to each other with a phone/facetime call to say hello.

The Griffith Office had no fundraising events go ahead due to COVID-19 but financial support came from Rotary Club's, individual donations, Club Grants program & the counter collection boxes in stores. Our small group of volunteers are keen to get active again to raise funds & get Country Hope's name out there.





Fundraising and Events Coordinators Report



Simon Barton

2022 has finally shown us light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel! The lingering effects of reduced community engagement is affecting the reawakening of fundraising, though there seems to be a shift towards the positive.

Having started with Country Hope in May 2022 (as staff) much of what I have to report commenced or happened before my time. Having volunteered with Country Hope for 14 years it is great to be apart of this side of this amazing charity and I am excited to contribute as the Fundraising & Events Coordinator.

Once again the most successful fundraising activity by far is the Riverina Car Rally, with the 2021-2022 event breaking a few records. Not only was it the highest fundraising year since its inception in 2016/17, beating the previously held record by over \$100,000, we also saw total donations from all 6 events breaking 2 million dollars! We are truly thankful for all the work the Rally Teams have put in over the years, most importantly the event organisers Gavin & Tammy.

Coming off the back of the very successful 2021 event, So Many Ways was held again in 2022. Whilst not as financially successful as last year, it was still profitable and a great community awareness activity and entertainment event for a few of our families.

The Wagga Wagga Picnic Races continued their long standing support of Country Hope by donating \$20,000 from their 2021 race meet. This is quite remarkable given the event was run during Covid-19 Restrictions. We supported this year's event by attending and selling raffle tickets.

The Classic and Historic Automobile Club of Australia (Wagga Wagga) held it's annual Swap Meet and Country Hope was invited to run the Show-and-Shine competition. The event was a moderate financial success, however a great community engagement activity with over 70 cars entering and hundreds of Swap Meet visitors having a look at the cars on show.

This year has seen the introduction of **On Key 4 Kids** in our Albury-Wodonga Border region. Spearheaded by Kristy, this is a significant fundraising campaign that we hope to turn into a series of events across our support region, working to raise both funds and increase our community engagement and brand awareness. Even though this was only the first year, fundraising looks like it will finish at over \$140,000 - which is an amazing achievement for the first year.

The 2022-2023 Mega Raffle is in flight with 10 amazing prizes on offer. All prizes were donated this year, except the major boat prize which was sourced at a heavily discounted price. There are a series of local businesses selling tickets on our behalf and community selling activities have commenced but will kick off in earnest in early 2023.

Along with events and fundraising activities, I have been working on implementing a robust online fundraising solution. On Key 4 Kids introduced our first multi-page campaign specific fundraising site and work has already begun on a single Country Hope Giving Hub, which will manage event registration, fundraising, donations and appeals along with fundraiser and donor support. These fundraising platforms are integrated with our Fundraising Management System , allowing us to understand and track our donors and fundraisers.

I look forward to what 2023 will bring, particularly with Country Hope Turning 20!

Fundraising and Events Photo Gallery



Show-and-Shine



Soo Many Ways



Country Club Golden Hole

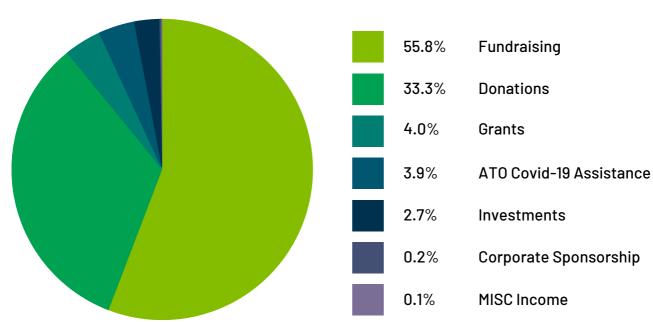


Picnic Races



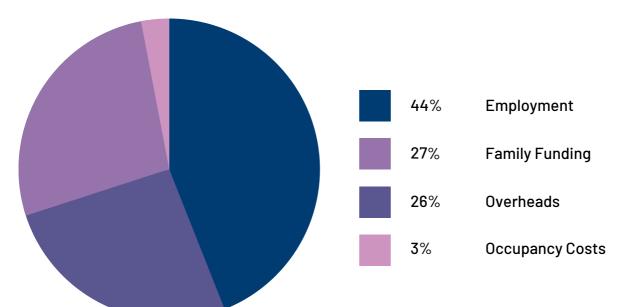
On Key 4 Kids

Financials at a Glance Where the money comes from and is spent



Income





Country Hope Structure & Management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Anne Lowe General Director







Patrick Barrett Sally Whitley Secretary - Vice Chairman Treasurer



Jenny Spain General Director

Angela Croft General Director



Ged Madden General Director

STAFF



Kristy McMahon North East VIC and Border Regional Coordinator



Vera Entwistle Babs Donaldson John Studdert





Bev Devery Family Liaison Officer Griffith & Surrounds

Steve Dwyer

Brian & Joy Kahlefeldt



Taylah Hives Family Liaison Officer Administration Wagga Wagga & Surrounds



Simon Barton Fundraising & Events Coordinator

 Tammy & Gavin Gilbert
 Lynne & Arthur de Jong

Rod Dunlop

Richard Allsopp

Shout out to our **Volunteers and Supporters**

Volunteers

Without the support of our amazing volunteers, Country Hope would not be able to deliver it's programs, conduct fundraising or engage meaningfully with the community. For all that (and more) we offer our most heartfelt thanks, which in no way expresses the true value and importance our volunteers bring to Country Hope and the Families we support, but we hope shows just how much we appreciate you and all the work you do.

Special Mention needs to be made to the following:

Family Fun Day Committee Family Fun Day Buddy's and Volunteers **Albury Shop Volunteers Raffle Ticket Sellers**

BBQ Cooking Masters Dubbo Fundraising Committee West Wyalong Fundraising Committee Dawn Skidmore

Donors and Supporters

Acknowledgement and thank you needs to be made to all our wonderful donors and supporters. There are so many that contribute to the success of Country Hope, far too many to fit here, however we would like to call out a few for their outstanding contribution:

Riverina Redneck Rally Baiada Group Griffith Lions Club St Johns Wipers Hutcheon & Pearce

Wagga Wagga Picnic Races **Trowella Gardens Social Club** South Wagga Wagga Rotary Club **Tammy and Gavin Gilbert Coachman Hotel Motel Wagga Motocycles**

RegionRiverina **Beyond Bank** Wagga Fruit Supply **Ray White Albury North**

Rotar

WIN TV









Regi









Event Spotlight Family Fun Days 2022

At the end of 2021 the Camp Committee were optimistic and excited to be finally planning a camp after a 2 year hiatus.

However, when Cobid-19 had a resurgence at the beginning of 2022, it was clear that whilst the risk of Covid-19 would be reduced by September, it would not be sufficiently reduced to risk the health and safety of our children families, but we did want to do something "camp-like", and so the Family Fund Days were born.

Spread over two days, the event was designed to bring together some of the best parts of

camp (rides, games, craft and FUN!), whilst avoiding some of the the ones that would potentially be a Covid-19 risk (like sleeping in the same rooms overnight).

Day 1 was available to camp eligible children (ages 7-16) to simulate a day at camp the most and Day 1 was open to the whole family.

Special one off t-shirts were produced and the days included show rides, craft, face painting, ice-cream vans, coffee vans, a disco and a special visit from a few celebrities.



Event Spotlight Family Fun Days 2022







What do we need? We need your help!

We are a not-for-profit organisation and rely on the generosity of local businesses, community and corporate sponsorship

VOLUNTEER BECOME A BUDDDY BECOME A BUSINESS SPONSOR LEAVE A BEQUEST IN YOUR WILL MAKE REGULAR OR ONE OFF DONATION DONATE YOUR SERVICES FUNDRAISE FOR US SPREAD THE WORD!







WAGGA WAGGA ALBURY-WODONGA GRIFFITH DUBBO

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