



countryhope

Country Hope Trust

*To give relief
when it matters most*

NSW
VIC
ABN

CFN 17801
FR0016602
93 187 189 789



Annual Report 2023

***“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).

Country Hope is authorised to conduct fundraising and gambling/raffle activities in both NSW (CFN 17801) and VIC (FR0016602 / 62794)

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

OUR MISSION

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OUR VALUES



Passion



Commitment



Care



Integrity

country **hope**

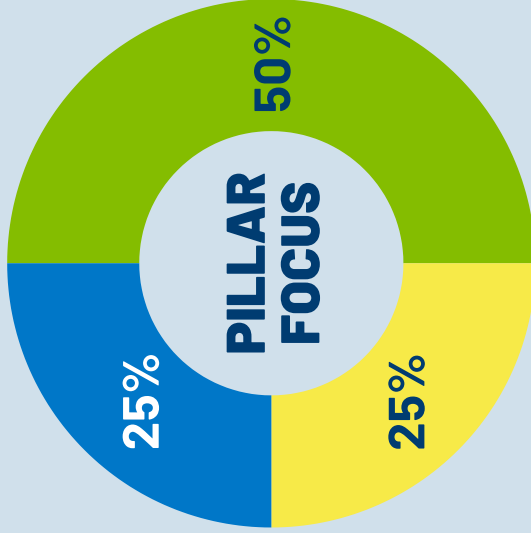


OUR PILLARS

**RELIEF
AND
SUPPORT**

**SUSTAINABLE
AND
RESILIENT**

**EFFECTIVE AND
MEANINGFUL
ENGAGEMENT**



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 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
- Adopt new and emerging technology for sustainable business needs

ADVOCATE AND COLLABORATE TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

- Engage with stakeholders and networks to build brand recognition, credibility 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

country **hope**



Message from the Chairman



Kerry Flinn

It is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Chairman's Report for 2023. This year has been nothing short of incredible, and I am thrilled to share our successes with you.

Our "Time Out for Life" children's holiday camp was a resounding success, and I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the camp committee, medical staff, buddies, and volunteers who made it all possible. The Country Hope kids had an absolute ball, and it was a joy to see their happy, smiling faces.

Once again, the "Riverina Outback Rally" was held in March, raising an astounding \$565,405. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tammy and Gavin Gilbert and their team for their tireless efforts in organising the event. We are forever indebted to their generosity, which has put us in an excellent financial position. I would also like to thank all the teams involved in the rally each year for their continued support.

Thanks to our supporters' unwavering generosity, Country Hope has never been in a better financial position. We achieved a net income of \$678,931 this year, which is almost \$350,000 higher than FY2022 and better than our previous best year (FY2021 - \$587,674).

I extend a special thanks to Baiada Group, Casella Wines, Beyond Bank, Thomas Bros, Remax, Regional Australia Bank, Wagga Picnic Races, The Marian & E.H Flack Trust, and our regular individual donors for their invaluable contributions to our organisation.

I must also acknowledge our exceptional team at Country Hope, led by our General Manager, Ellie Webb. Ellie's dedication and hard work are truly inspiring, and we are lucky to have her.

I would also like to thank Simon Barton, who has done a fantastic job in administration, particularly with the finance side of things. He has been instrumental in our successful transition from MYOB to XERO.

Please join me in welcoming our new board members, Morris Massarotto, Jenny Skidmore, and Kirsty Fenton. They bring invaluable experience and expertise in finance, accounting, investment, strategic planning, fundraising, events, grant management, program evaluation, and governance to our organisation.

Jacqui Turner has also joined our team as our new Family and Community Relationship Officer. She has been involved with Country Hope for many years in the West Wyalong area and has been a valued participant in the rally several times.

Welcome Candace Holyman! We are thrilled to have you on board the Albury team, working alongside Kristy McMahon, who is doing an incredible job reviving Country Hope in the area financially and increasing its exposure. Keep up the fantastic work!

Finally, the 20-year celebration was a huge success. Although I was unable to attend due to being overseas, I have received fantastic feedback from those who did. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those involved in organising the event.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the staff and fellow board members for their unwavering support and commitment to helping Country Hope grow into the remarkable local charity it is today.

Kerry Flinn

Cody Wheeler

Witness the incredible triumph of a true champion!

Meet Cody, a young warrior with an unbreakable spirit. Despite facing the challenges of Dent's disease, Rickets, Short Stature, Lung Disease, and Kidney problems, Cody has refused to let his conditions define him. Every 4 weeks, he receives IVIG-Intravenous immunoglobulin, undergoing surgeries on his legs along the way.



Cody's story is not just about his medical battles; it's about his indomitable courage and unwavering determination. Starting at the local PSSA athletic carnival completing in shot put, discus, and sprint races like the 100 and 200 meters, Cody has defied all odds making it to State and then onto the Nationals.

Cody's journey has been one of great determination and perseverance. Despite facing many challenges along the way, he never lost sight of his goals. His unwavering spirit and positive attitude are a testament to the power of the human spirit.

We can all learn from Cody's example and strive to overcome the obstacles that we encounter in our own lives. By sharing his story, we can inspire others to believe in themselves and pursue their passions. Let's come together to celebrate Cody's achievements and continue to spread the message of hope and resilience to all those around us.



Cody and his family are one of the many families Country Hope supports.

By supporting Country Hope, you can help make a difference in the lives of families like Cody's. Your support can provide hope and relief to families who are going through a difficult time. Let's come together and make a positive impact in our community.

Message from the General Manager

Ellie Webb

This year Country Hope turned 20! This is truly remarkable and momentous. In those 20 years, and for the next 20 years, Country Hope has been dedicated to supporting country families who have a child diagnosed with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

Over the past 20 years, we have witnessed extraordinary stories of courage, resilience, and 'hope'. Each child diagnosed with cancer or other life-threatening illnesses faced unimaginable challenges, and yet their spirit remained unbroken. They have inspired us to push boundaries, to think beyond conventional limits, and to provide the best possible emotional and financial support.

Our families have allowed us into their lives. We are forever grateful for your trust, your strength, and your resilience. You have taught us invaluable lessons in the face of adversity, and your unwavering spirit has inspired us to go above and beyond in our mission and vision... to give relief...when it matters most.

Throughout our journey, Country Hope has become more than just an organization. It has transformed into a beacon of 'hope', a sanctuary where families find solace, and a community where care, integrity, passion, and commitment flourish. We have walked hand in hand with countless families, embracing them with open hearts and nurturing them with dedicated support.

To our donors, thank you for your continued generosity. Your contributions have not only eased the financial burdens faced by our families but also provided a glimmer of 'hope' during their darkest moments. Your support has



been the lifeline that has allowed us to continue our mission and vision year after year providing financial assistance, emotional support, and the resources necessary to ease the burden that these families face.

To the incredible team of staff, directors, volunteers, fundraisers, partners, and supporters, thank you for your tireless dedication, your unyielding passion, and your wonderful belief in the power of 'hope'. Your commitment has been the driving force behind our success, and without you, none of this would have been possible. It is an honor to work alongside you all, contributing to the success of Country Hope.

We started the year with a few challenges, but we are finishing in a strong position which is evidence of the ongoing importance of our mission and vision, and the homage to the passion and commitment of Country Hope's staff, board, volunteers, and partners.

Thank you...

Ellie Webb

May all that is beautiful, meaningful, hopeful and brings you joy be yours this Christmas and throughout the New Year...



Corey Toole

Country Hope Ambassador

Corey Toole was a cheerful and lively kid who loved playing sports from an early age. However, his parents began to worry when he started experiencing frequent nosebleeds. Their concern led them to take him to the doctor, where Corey was diagnosed with leukemia at the tender age of five. Despite the countless trips to Sydney and ongoing treatments, Corey remained undaunted. After a hard-fought battle, Corey finally received the good news that he was cancer-free at age ten.



Corey's parents were concerned about his safety, so he couldn't play contact sports until he was 12. However, his passion for rugby ignited when he finally had the chance to play. At 17, he joined the Wagga Waratahs Rugby Club first-grade team, before moving on to the Gungahlin Eagles. In 2021/22, Corey represented Australia in the World Rugby Sevens and later played for Australia at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Corey's talent earned him a spot at the Brumbies Academy and in 2023, he signed with the Brumbies, where he made a remarkable debut in Super Rugby. The same year, he also played for the Australian A Team against Tonga and aspires to represent the Wallabies in international competition.

Despite the challenges he faced early in life, Corey was fortunate to have a supportive family and to attend Country Hope's "Time Out for Life" Children's holiday camp with his siblings. This experience allowed him to forget about treatment, doctors, and hospitals for a while and just enjoy being a kid. Corey believes that with support and perseverance, one can overcome any obstacles and achieve their goals.



Our Support Programs

For the Families in our region

Financial

Families who have a child with a serious illness often need help with their day-to-day expenses, such as mortgages, rent, food, utility bills, fuel, and education. In many cases, families are required to maintain two households: one in the city where the diagnosed child is hospitalised, and another at home with the remaining siblings. This often leaves one parent with the sick child, far away from home, while the other is left to balance work and caring for the other children.

Emotional

Country Hope extends beyond practical aid and also offers a range of emotional support to families. This includes counselling, group gatherings, and luncheons to help them through difficult times.

Art Therapy

Our team of trained art therapy specialists provides guided sessions for the children under our care. These sessions help children interpret, express, and resolve their emotions and thoughts in a supportive environment.

Travel & Accommodation

For families, travel and accommodation can be a significant financial burden. That's why Country Hope offers assistance in the form of fuel cards for driving, flight bookings when needed, and arranging lodging.

Time out for life holiday camp

At our yearly children's holiday camp, we provide a safe space for kids to simply be kids. Not only do they get to enjoy various fun activities, but they also get to interact with others who have gone through similar experiences. Through this, long-lasting relationships are formed between the campers, buddies, and volunteers.

Home and Hospital Visits

Dedicated Family Liaison Officers visit families in their homes, and when possible, in the hospital, to provide support. They listen carefully and empathetically, ensuring that the families are taken care of.

Family Holidays

We strongly encourage families to take a break from their daily routines whenever possible. We provide them with fuel, groceries, and spending money to ensure that going on vacation won't be a financial burden. Many families struggle to afford a vacation, which is why we believe in giving them this opportunity to get away from their stresses.

Christmas Party

We host annual Christmas parties across our regions. The festivities include games, rides, food, face painting, and even petting zoos. We welcome the whole family to join us, and each child receives a special present from Santa.



Photo Spotlight On Key 4 Kids



Albury/Wodonga Regional Coordinator



Kristy McMahon

Our team has made significant strides this year, thanks to the move to our new location in Central Albury. We now utilise our lovely redbrick house to provide more opportunities for families to connect, learn, and create.

Weekly Art Therapy workshops allow diagnosed children and their siblings to bond with others who share similar journeys, while guided sessions encourage open conversations about their experiences and emotions. Our volunteers lead the workshops, allowing me to check in with parents and carers to ensure that the whole family is receiving the support they need.

Our new Central Albury location also served as the base for our 2nd annual "On Key 4 Kids" fundraising campaign, which paired community members with vocal coaches to raise nearly \$130,000 for our cause. At the sold-out gala dinner and show at the SS&A in Albury, teams competed for titles such as Best Performance, Highest Fundraiser, and People's Choice.

We are thrilled to announce that Albury Wodonga Health has hired a Paediatric Oncology Cancer Care Coordinator and Family Care Coordinator. This means that families can access local care and services, like imaging, pathology, and some low-risk chemotherapy protocols and surgeries, instead of traveling long distances.

The number of families we support in this region has doubled in the past year, from 20

to 40, and we now support over 100 children in our local service.

Country Hope has also introduced new services this year, including telehealth counselling and family fun day activities such as Mother's Day bowling, Father's Day movies, Easter Egg Hunt, and Laser Tag Christmas Party. Our Annual "Time Out for Life" camp in Borambola was a hit, with many local children making new friends.

None of these achievements would be possible without our incredible volunteers and the wider Country Hope team.

We're excited for what the future holds in 2024, and on that note, I'd like to wish everyone a safe, joyful, and happy holiday season.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Kristy McMahon



Fundraising and Events Photo Gallery



Wagga/Griffith Family & Community Relationship Officer



Jacqui Turner

I commenced work as a Family Liaison officer in February this year. Having been involved with Country Hope for a number of years through the West Wyalong Country Hope committee and participating in the early years of the Riverina Outback Rally, it has been humbling to work closely with the families that have children diagnosed with cancer and life-threatening illnesses, highlighting the positive impact that the fundraising that I have previously participated has for these families.

Sadly, we have registered 22 new families from across all the regions over the past 10 months. Some families appreciated the short-term assistance we provided to help them over a crisis, whilst others will likely be supported over the long term as they navigate a tough journey.

The highlight of the year for the children was the return of the Time Out for Life Camp. A lot of our families had some hesitation in the return of the camp and what it may entail health-wise for the children, with the first year back after COVID.

I had lots of conversations with mums and dads about what they could expect but ended up with a great participation rate. Needless to say, we have only had positive feedback, with all the children having a full and wonderful week. Many thanks have to go to the effort and work that the Camp

Committee put in to make this such a successful event.

I have spent some time with the volunteer groups based in the Griffith and West Wyalong areas. These people have worked tirelessly over the years for our cause. I am looking forward to building on relationships within our community with volunteers, medical staff and other stakeholders that will raise more awareness of what we do and assist us to continue to deliver our services to local families when they need us the most.

With the Family Christmas party organisation well underway for the end of the month, we can finish the year on a fun note with our families.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

I look forward to catching up with everyone again in the New Year.



Fundraising and Events Coordinators Report



Jenny Skidmore

2023 has been a busy year for fundraising, mission awareness and relationship building for Country Hope and it is my intention to continue to cultivate these relationships through into 2024 and beyond.

As I only joined the Board of Directors for Country Hope at the end of July 2023, much of what I have to report on predates my time here.

Once again the most successful fundraising donor by far is the **Riverina Outback Rally**, with the 2022-2023 Rally raising \$573,451.00 which broke the record for the highest amount raised to date. The record for highest team amount raised was also broken this year which was an incredible \$90,500.00 by a team who travelled all the way from Melbourne, showing just how far a reach the Riverina Outback Rally has! We are truly thankful for all the work the Rally Teams have put in over the years, most importantly the event organisers Gavin & Tammy. To date the Riverina Outback Rally has raised over \$2.6 million with next year's target set to push that over the \$3 million mark.

In August we had our **20th Birthday Celebration** at The Range Function Centre. It was a fantastic night with many familiar faces from the past 20 years. Simon worked incredibly hard to ensure the event ran without a hitch and although the purpose was not to raise funds, we did bring in over \$5,000.00.

The **Wagga Wagga Picnic Races** has continued their long standing support of Country Hope by donating \$30,000. Simon, Dawn and I attended this year's event. We set up the Country Hope cornhole boards for attendees to play and completely sold out of stubby holders. We also used the event as a networking opportunity and successfully secured two sponsors for our 2024 Country Hope Calendar and are hopeful that these will also result in two new community partnerships.

This years **On Key 4 Kids** in our Albury-Wodonga Border region was another roaring success raising over \$125,000.00. Kristy and her team have worked tirelessly to ensure the event was a success from start to finish and she has done a fantastic job in nurturing the community relationships which were formed off the back of last year's event.

This year I have introduced two new major fundraising campaigns which are designed to be annual events with a minimum of a 5 year life cycle.

The first being the **Country Hope Charity Art Calendar**. The calendar has been carefully curated, and is intended to make art accessible to all. This has enabled us to shine a spotlight on 12 different Riverina artists and their unique and beautiful works, while also supporting local businesses. The calendars will be sold across various locations including the River and Wren Christmas Markets and the 'Christmas with the Con' event.

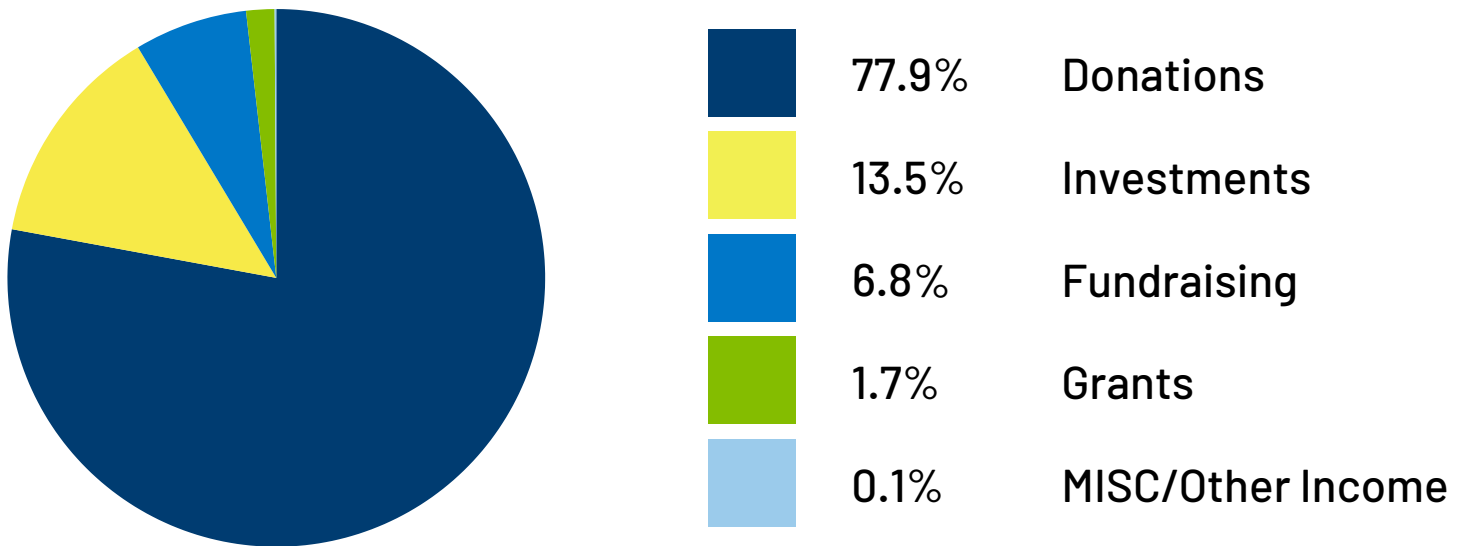
Our second inaugural campaign will be '**Light a Light of Hope**' which will be featured at the 'Christmas with the Con' event on the 16th of December. For this campaign, people will have the opportunity to purchase a light on behalf of a loved one who they have lost or even on behalf of someone who has won a battle with cancer or other life threatening illness.

This year we have organised to have lights on an existing tree down at the Riverside Precinct to be lit during the 'Christmas with the Con' event. We have bigger plans going forward and intend to have a custom-built 'Tree of Hope' for future years. We are very excited to be collaborating with The Riverina Conservatorium of Music on this event and hope to continue an ongoing community partnership with them.

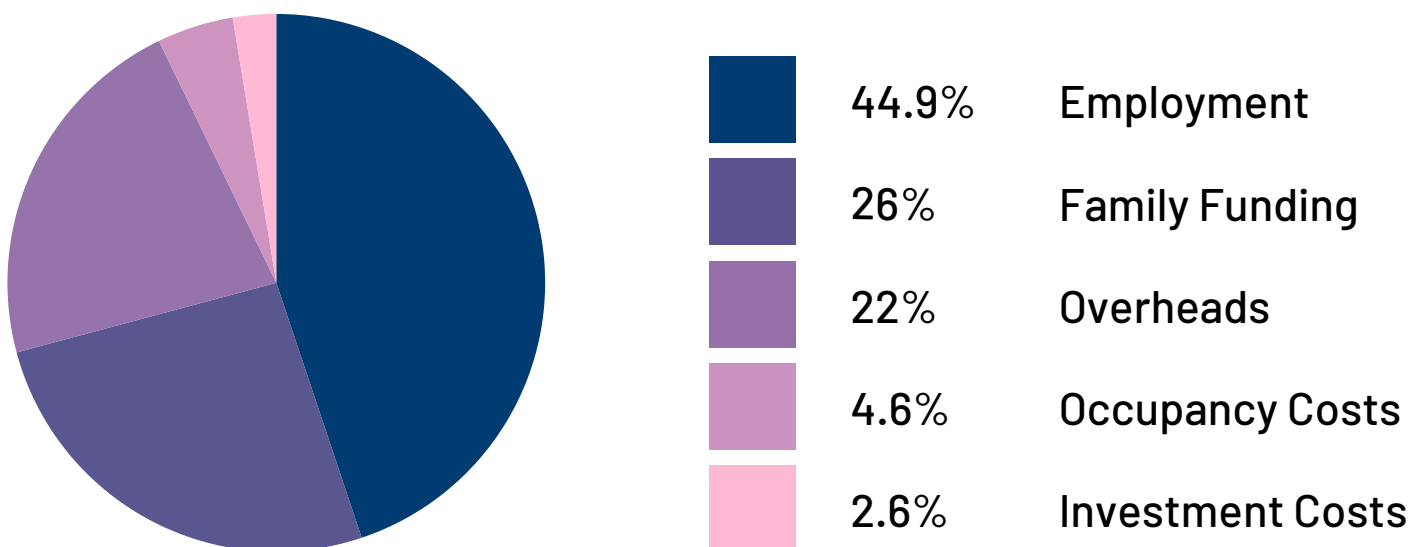
Financials at a Glance

Where the money comes from and is spent

Income



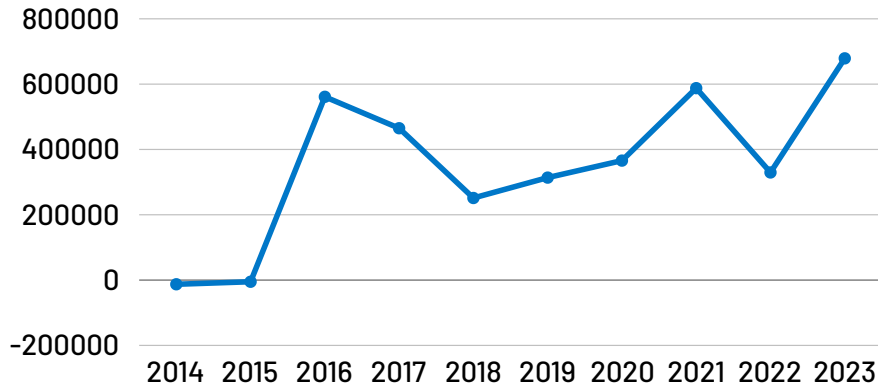
Expenses



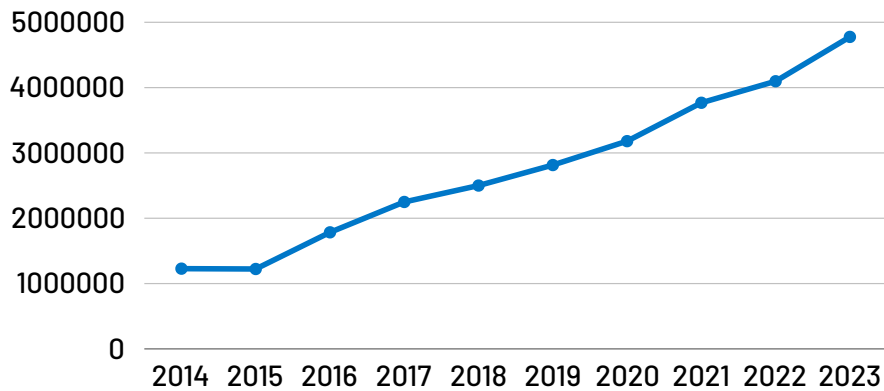
Financials at a Glance

Trends over time

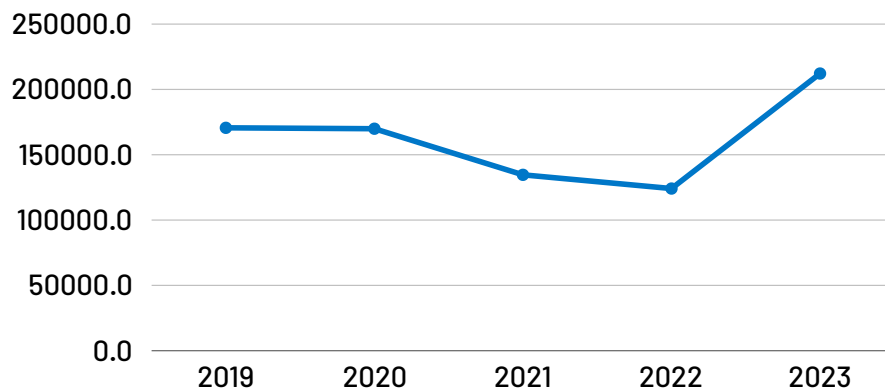
Net Profit - 10yr Trend



Net Assets - 10yr Trend



Family Funding - 5yr Trend



Shout out to our Volunteers and Supporters

Volunteers

Without the support of our amazing volunteers, Country Hope would not be able to deliver its 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:

Olivia Britton
Camp Committee
Camp Buddy's and Volunteers
Joy and Jason Marchingo
John Oswald
Raffle Ticket Sellers
Art Therapy Volunteers

Jack Henderson
BBQ Cooking Masters
Dubbo Fundraising Committee
West Wyalong Fundraising Committee
Maddie Steer
Dawn Skidmore
Serena McGuffie
Amanda Slabbart

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:

Wagga Wagga Picnic Races
Trowella Gardens Social Club
South Wagga Wagga Rotary Club
Tammy and Gavin Gilbert
Griffith Lions Club
Xypex Australia
Jim and Phyllis Edwards
The Flack Trust

Riverina Outback Rally
Beyond Bank
Baiada Group
Remax Elite
Thomas Bros
BEEDEE BAGS
On Key 4 Kids Singers and Mentors
Rotary Club of Albury

WIN TV
Stacey Fulton
RegionRiverina
Regional Australia Bank
Wagga Fruit Supply
Wagga Ag College Rugby
Albury Galvanising
Adroit Insurance



Event Spotlight

Time Out For Life Camp

We are thrilled to present an exciting report on this year's "Time Out For Life" Children's Holiday Camp held at the Borambola Sport and Recreation Centre from Sunday the 24th to Friday the 29th of September. It was a week full of laughter, adventure, and unforgettable memories!

Firstly, let's talk about the attendance. We had a fantastic turnout with 43 enthusiastic campers ready to embark on a week-long journey of fun and friendship. To ensure everyone had a great time, we were supported by 31 incredible buddies who were there every step of the way. Additionally, we were lucky to have 16 dedicated volunteers who added an extra touch of magic to the camp.

Now let's dive into the highlights of this amazing camp! The campers had the opportunity to try their hand at various thrilling activities such as archery, fishing, canoeing, BMX biking and rock climbing. They also had the chance to explore their scientific side in the science building. But that's not all – we took them on exciting outings to the circus, inflatable world, and the PCYC. And for those with a flair for creativity, there were pottery and craft sessions to let their imaginations soar.

One of the most unforgettable moments was the mesmerizing performance by Singer Grant Luhrs and the captivating Zana Aerial Dance Academy. The campers were left in awe by their extraordinary talents – truly an experience they will cherish forever.

The theme for this year's camp was "The Sea,"

which added an extra layer of excitement and adventure to all the activities. From exploring underwater creatures to creating beautiful sea-inspired crafts, the campers truly immersed themselves in this theme.

And let's not forget about Disco night! It wouldn't have been complete without DJ Steve Bowen, who kept everyone grooving to the beat and dancing the night away. It was a night to remember, filled with laughter and joy.



Our deepest appreciation goes out to all the campers, buddies, volunteers, and performers who came together to create an unforgettable experience. Your energy, enthusiasm, and dedication were vital to the success of the camp, and we cannot thank you enough. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the incredible staff at Borambola for their outstanding management of the event and their commitment to the sea-themed décor and activities.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the following donors who made this possible: AVIS Wagga, The Picnic Races, The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust, Wagga Fruit Supply, Woolworths, and The Wagga Potters Club.

We can't wait to see what next year's Camp has in store for us. Until then, keep spreading the joy and making beautiful memories!

The Camp Committee

Event Spotlight

Time Out For Life Camp



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 BUDDY

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!



Country Hope Structure & Management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kerry Flinn
Chairman



Patrick Barrett
Secretary - Vice Chairman



Sally Whitley
Treasurer



Anne Lowe
General Director



Morris Massarotto
General Director



Jenny Skidmore
Fundraising and
Events Director



Ged Madden
General Director



Kirsty Fenton
General Director



Ellie Webb
General Manager



Kristy McMahon
North East VIC and
Border Regional
Coordinator



Jacqui Turner
Family & Community
Relationship Officer
Wagga/ Griffith



Candace Holyman
Administration
Officer



Simon Barton
Finance and
Administration
Coordinator

STAFF

Patrons

Vera Entwistle
Babs Donaldson
John Studdert

Brian & Joy Kahlefeldt
Steve Dwyer
Tammy & Gavin Gilbert

Rod Dunlop
Richard Allsopp
Lynne & Arthur de Jong



country**hope**

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GRIFFITH
DUBBO**

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