

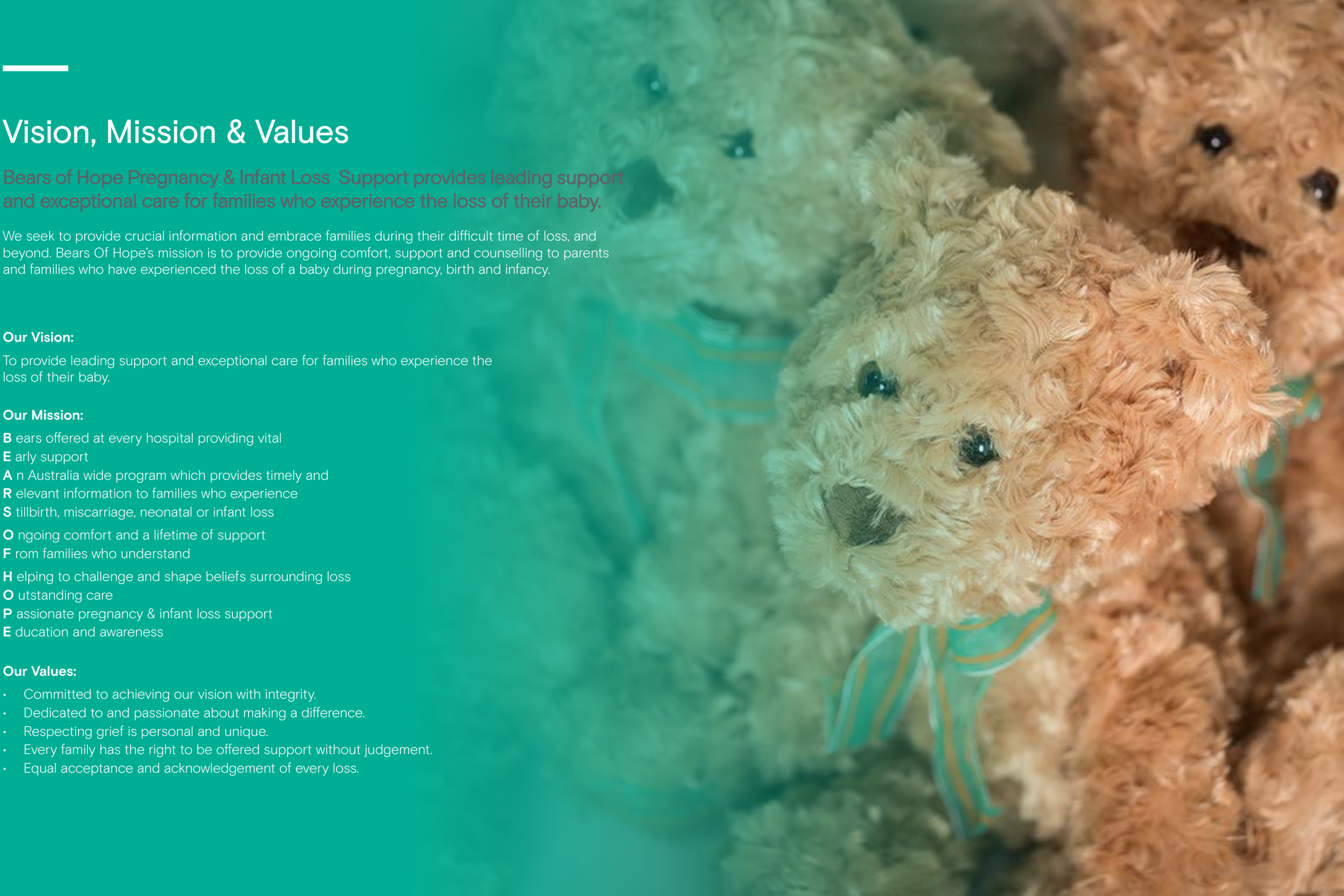


Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support

Annual Review 2021 – 2022

Bears Of Hope Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support





Vision, Mission & Values

Bears of Hope Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support provides leading support and exceptional care for families who experience the loss of their baby.

We seek to provide crucial information and embrace families during their difficult time of loss, and beyond. Bears Of Hope’s mission is to provide ongoing comfort, support and counselling to parents and families who have experienced the loss of a baby during pregnancy, birth and infancy.

Our Vision:

To provide leading support and exceptional care for families who experience the loss of their baby.

Our Mission:

- B**ears offered at every hospital providing vital
- E**arly support
- A**n Australia wide program which provides timely and
- R**elevant information to families who experience
- S**tillbirth, miscarriage, neonatal or infant loss
- O**ngoing comfort and a lifetime of support
- F**rom families who understand
- H**elping to challenge and shape beliefs surrounding loss
- O**utstanding care
- P**assionate pregnancy & infant loss support
- E**ducation and awareness

Our Values:

- Committed to achieving our vision with integrity.
- Dedicated to and passionate about making a difference.
- Respecting grief is personal and unique.
- Every family has the right to be offered support without judgement.
- Equal acceptance and acknowledgement of every loss.

Everyday in Australia:

- 6 babies are stillborn
- 3 babies die after birth & before their first birthday
- A miscarriage occurs every 3.5 minutes

1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss.

President's Report

Amanda Bowles

Bears Of Hope CEO & Co-Founder

Bears Of Hope has had another strong year and I want to thank our Board for their continued dedication to our vision and to empowering the team to grow and adapt with the needs of the families we serve. I am so proud to lead this team of incredible people that constantly make a difference in the lives of so many.

This year Bears Of Hope has seen remarkable growth in the delivery of our counselling services despite not returning to face to face services and events. We are looking forward to the return of these services in the new financial year and have a wealth of new workshops and wellbeing groups in development for launch in both regional and capital cities. Almost doubling the number of fee free counselling sessions from last year we needed to increase our permanent support team and welcomed Bec from a volunteer counsellor to the permanent team which has enabled even greater opportunities for our support growth and education sessions with health professionals.

All of our success at Bears Of Hope occurs through the incredible work of our small and mighty team and this year they have been Instrumental in setting up in readiness for returning to pre covid events whilst continuing our online services. Thank you to each of you for your constant desire to create a safe and sacred space for bereaved families and your efforts to uphold our values.

The reflections of the past year have reaffirmed for me of the value of our services. We operate solely through the generosity of community funding and majority of the community learn of our services through their own loss or the loss a loved one has experienced. Our strong year of fundraising is a testament to the impact of our services and I would like to extend our thanks to every donor and fundraiser for their contributions to ensuring our supports are available for other families yet to walk the path of baby loss. Without each of you we simply do not operate and our strong financials have ensured we are able to continue increasing our suite of services as we return to face to face events.

Finally, congratulations to each of our award winners this year it was a really close race in a number of categories and it shows the outstanding efforts so many people and businesses are going to for Bears Of Hope. I look forward to seeing many more nominations in the year ahead as we resume regular programs and events!

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a small, light-colored heart. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gently cradling the heart. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is tender and hopeful.A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Amanda Bowles".

Amanda Bowles
CEO & Co-Founder

Bears Of Hope Support Resources

We are here to provide the compassionate support and guidance that parents critically need at the beginning of their loss, and quickly build enduring connections.

We supply Bears Of Hope Support Packages at no cost to hospitals to be passed onto families before they leave their baby. Through a bear of hope (donated from another family in honour of their own baby) and resources carefully chosen and developed, parents are acknowledged, comforted and guided through their loss. They are empowered with vital information before they leave the hospital to minimise any regrets surrounding spending time and creating memories with their baby.

6,989
Bears Of Hope & Keepsakes
provided to families

These packages provide an immediate link to a community of support ready for them to lean on, giving parents options and a place to start. We understand how crucial it is that parents feel supported from the very beginning of their loss to facilitate their grieving and to reduce the isolation often felt after the loss of a baby.





74

Fee free counsellor
facilitated support
group participants

933

Fee free counselling
sessions provided

This year has again been a huge challenge to plan supports and I am forever grateful for the team we have at Bears of Hope that continues to hold patience and motivation in a time that has seen restriction in our services to bereaved parents. We thank those parents that have reached out and entrusted us to be part of your journey and enable us to be in that raw space with you. We are so privileged to be able to offer these supports to families and be able to stand alongside them in a time that can feel so alone and so isolated and hence we are so very grateful to the donations and fundraising that is done to continue our supports progressing and diversifying as they are.

Beyond The Bear Support

Counselling & Support

From July to April our team continued to adapt extremely well to to provide support in an online modality and increased this from just Telehealth to a new platform of Online Chat, providing parents an opportunity to talk when there are no words. Our online booking system has made it easy and convenient for parents to connect with a counsellor they feel would best support them and we are fortunate to continue with our 5 strong team providing diversity in modalities of therapy as well as time availability. We continue to offer support across 6 days (Mon-Sat) and appointment times that extend to 7pm over 4 days at no cost to a bereaved parent to access.

We have expanded our part-time team to two staff working 20hrs a week and welcome Bec from a volunteer position into this role. Bec works from our Head Office in Castle Hill and as covid began to settle we were able to again offer our Face to Face counselling in both Castle Hill and Miranda (Sydney locations). We also welcomed Francesca who joined Greg as a contractor with Bears of Hope and continued to receive the volunteer support of Dorothy in providing exceptional care to those that reach out to us for support.

With covid-restrictions easing around April, we were very grateful to begin planning in-person connections, this started with our Monthly Wellbeing Groups commencing in Castle Hill and the planning for ACT, Central Coast, Sutherland Shire and Blue Mountains (later part of 2022). These groups have a new look with the focus being on connections and offer a more social setting to welcome both parents to attend and have a chat. Our online monthly wellbeing group was the rock through the depth of covid and continues to offer support to all areas of Australia. Our new format of 6.30pm – 8pm on Zoom has provided great interest, particularly with our new approach of bring your pet to the group. Greg and Francesca do a wonderful job of holding space for parents to share their stories and seek support.

We planned our first interpersonal social event of Axe Throwing in April for Dads which brought 3 parents together for a chat and outlet of emotions – our support team are firm believers that emotions need motion in order for the heaviness of the grief carried to move and those that attended found this to be a great outlet. We have also started planning for our first Sport and Support for Dads in 2 years that will take place in September 2022 with 7 registered to attend already. We are very much looking forward to being back in the outdoors and using our qualifications to continue our supports in a healing way.

We have only just begun to look at the opportunities ahead of personal interaction within our supports and are hopeful of planning our workshops to be back in motion for 2023 – these will include our one-day sessions- Looking Inward at Grief Workshops as well as our Weekend events of Sport and Support and Restore and Relate. Our focus will be on reducing disadvantage of access due to distance and parents will find these supports will be accessible regardless of the state they reside in. In addition we are also looking forward to continuing to expand our online supports, such as Talk and Support – a webinar with a panel that focuses on varying grief related topics.

We look forward to a more open and social year of support ahead

Kelly Merchant
Beyond The Bear Support Services

Cuddle Cots

Our cuddle cots are such a valuable asset to grieving families in the hours and days following the loss of their baby. Although this past year saw the urgency for cuddle cots across Australia settle, after placing 96 the year before, we were able to donate 50 cuddle cots to services in need.

Since 2016, we have placed 280 Cuddle Cots, with 258 in hospitals, 8 in Hospices and 14 in funeral homes. We have balanced the fundraising throughout this past year, continuing to meet the demand so that we can equip these services with this vital equipment and continue leading the way in bereavement care.

With no government funding, we rely on the wider community each year to help raise \$6500 for each Cuddle Cot. We are incredibly grateful to each and every donor and fundraiser who have contributed towards our cuddle cot campaign this year. This also includes those who advocate for us and share our posts across social platforms to educate and create further awareness amongst the community.

Fundraising for a Cuddle Cot provides parents with purpose and helps them to feel like they have done something special in honour of their child; supporting them in their own loss as they help to support others.

Bereaved families feel immediately supported with access to a Cuddle Cot, which leads to improved experiences for the families, connections to our support services and a reduction to the isolation often felt after the loss of their baby.

Ultimately, it means that the receiving families have access to absolute sacred and uninterrupted time with their babies and the fundraisers & donors can create a special legacy for a much loved and deeply missed baby.



Cuddle Cot Placements in 21/22

NSW 18 (2021/2022)
39 (2020/2021)
112 since 2016

ACT 2 (2021/2022)
1 (2020/2021)
7 since 2016

VIC 9 (2021/2022)
17 (2020/2021)
58 since 2016

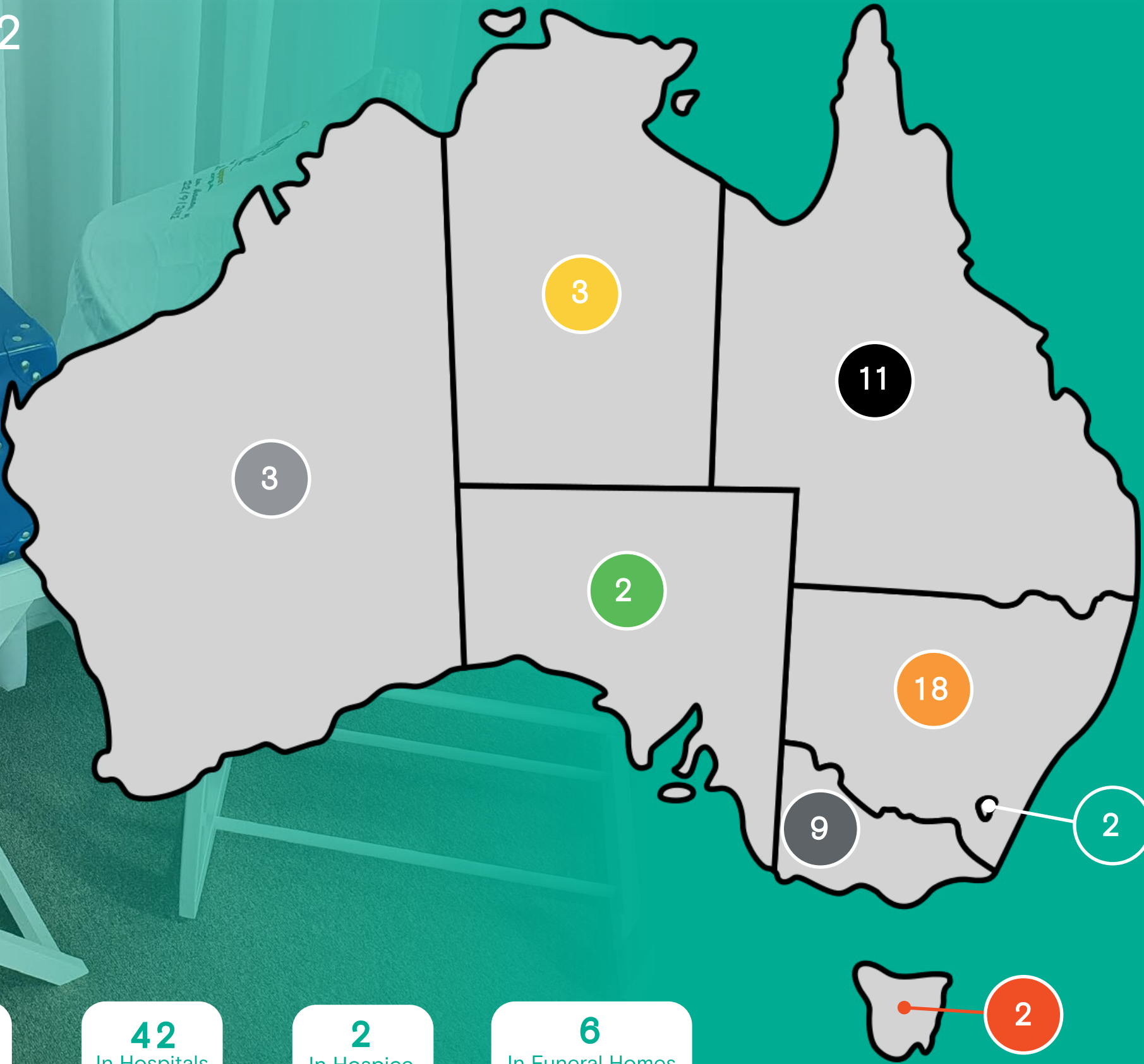
TAS 2 (2021/2022)
4 (2020/2021)
7 since 2016

SA 2 (2021/2022)
4 (2020/2021)
7 since 2016

WA 3 (2021/2022)
4 (2020/2021)
11 since 2016

NT 3 (2021/2022)
3 (2020/2021)
9 since 2016

QLD 11 (2021/2022)
24 (2020/2021)
69 since 2016



50
Placements

42
In Hospitals

2
In Hospice

6
In Funeral Homes

2

Choosing Hope – Walk Your Way 2021

Choosing Hope is a walk of remembrance and honour in support of bereaved families. These walks are not only a fundraising campaign, but a support program designed to connect bereaved parents and families to a larger community, offering peer-to-peer support. The sense of community is incredibly important to the Bears of Hope Theory of Change with reducing isolation a crucial outcome.

With COVID-19 restrictions, we were only able to hold one physical event in Launceston. Like we did in 2020, we chose to embrace virtual events and relaunch Choosing Hope – Walk Your Way. Our goal remained for families to feel connected to a community of support, to honour their babies in a meaningful way, help raise awareness and funds for our services.

Virtual walks meant BOH were not limited by location, and people from all over Australia were able to take part! There were participants in regional QLD, WA and SA where the physical walks don't usually take place.

Walk Your Way allowed our participants to physically stay in their own bubbles whilst allowing them to feel a sense of community and unity with other participants through teams and online engagement. Fundraisers were proud to wear their shirts out in the community, which acknowledged their babies. This was reflected in the photos that were shared with us.

11,447.29
Kilometres Walked

8,242,428
Steps Taken

547
Individual Choosing Hope Sign-ups

1500
Support packs funded for Bereaved families

“The day is done beautifully with such hope love and respect. I am so glad there is something like this to recognise the babies that are no longer here and talk to people that have gone through the same thing and to know that you are not alone. These precious little babies will never be forgotten.”

– Choosing Hope Guest



Beards Of Hope 2021

Beards Of Hope is a national awareness and fundraising campaign where any bereaved dad, family member or mate can get involved and grow their beards between 1st June and 31st August.

Held annually since 2014, the campaign enables a bereaved dad to express their grief and to seek support from those around them. It is not just a fundraising campaign but also a support service in itself, enabling dads to connect with each other for peer-to-peer support.

All funds raised via our BearDs Of Hope campaign each year are raised to fund our fee free support services. This year, we also directed a portion of funds towards a Father's Day initiative, to 'recognise and celebrate all Dads on Father's Day'. A special graphic was created and made available to all dads. These images were personalized and emailed to everyone who registered.

These were created specifically to acknowledge Dads on Father's Day & to try and help reduce the isolation that can be felt on these occasions.

This year we saw an increase in bereaved Dad sign ups – with 63% of this years registrants being bereaved Dads; in comparison to 52% in the previous year.

The overall age of registrants ranged from 17 up to 69 years old!!

177
Fundraisers

29
Teams

\$134,182.04
Funds Raised



Community

Packing Days

2

Packing Days

12

Volunteers

144

Boxes Filled

1728

Bear Packages Packed

With restrictions placed on our warehouse in 2021, we were unable to hold any community packing days. Our Bears Of Hope staff and their families packed approximately 2 more pallets, equal to 72 boxes or 720 bags of Sophie Bears. .

In May 2022, we were thrilled to welcome our first corporate group back on site – Olympus Technology Services. Over two days, 12 Olympus Tech employees packed 1728 (144 boxes) of Sophie and Hope resource bags.





Thank you to our valued Corporate Supporters & Sponsors

We are so grateful for your generosity. Thank you for standing alongside of us and helping us provide hope and support to so many grieving families this year.

**TED DUNN
FOUNDATION**



**AKMT
FINANCIAL SERVICES**



Aurea
Sincere Funerals
The Jasmine Lily Foundation
Rugbytots Mid North Coast
Rugbytots Central Queensland
Marshall Family Foundation
Obstetrics And Gynaecology Clinic
Mumificent PPL
Aus Railway Services
Oakville Harvest
GPT Management
fournines
Linfield NSW Pty Ltd
New Age Veneers Pty Ltd
Australian Inland Wine Show Inc.

Little Swans Early Learning
MKW Construction Pty Ltd
Stockade Training Centre
Zenith Energy Australia
Birdie Wealth
PK Podiatry
Powercor Bendigo Construction Lineys
PRD Tamworth
Craig Abell Smash Repairs
Melioem Pty Ltd
Mckeage Cole Foundation
Mondelez Australia Ptd Ltd
Grown Florists
Bebe Robes
Lisa Knight – The body Shop at Home

Award Winners

2022 Founders Award
Luke & Cassie Akehurst



2022 Community Spirit Award
Adam & Kyrae Simpson



2022 Volunteer of the Year
Beckie Coleman



2022 Corporate Supporter of the Year
OlympusTech





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*"A life so brief, a child so small,
you had the power to touch us all"*
– Anonymous

