



WE CARE CONNECT IMPACT REPORT



FY | 21 22

Thank you for contributing to my dignity at a time when my life has been at rock bottom

Local family recipient



2433

children supported
+ a further

1681

through smaller packs

4114
IN TOTAL



13,730

children helped since 2016

75 TONNES

of nursery items saved
from landfill

127,848

items re-homed, valued at

OVER \$1M

(\$1,189,877 second hand)

WE DISTRIBUTED

128 prams
101 cots
175 car seats
33 bassinets
1013 packets of nappies
129,040 material aid items
62 high chairs
794 birthday presents
426 Back 2 school full backpacks
6573 Christmas presents

We are partnering with 254 case workers, 78 support agencies, 8 drop off locations

On average we deliver \$489 of value to each family at the cost of \$42 per child.

“

I just wanted to express my greatest thanks and gratitude for the care package you guys arranged for a mum and three children in need, every single item was well received and tears of happiness were shared by mum and admittedly a little from me too. Thank you for all you do, thank you for the care in choosing items for the family, incredibly generous and incredibly kind

Local Case Worker

2

”



CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE

Rob Dixon

Another very busy year has witnessed some significant changes for We Care Connect. Demand for our services has continued to grow each year and the organisation's structures and the work ethic of our volunteers has ensured that this increased demand has always been met in a timely manner.

The goal of extending our reach to meet the needs of families in the Hunter Region has been a long-anticipated goal and significant planning and decision making has been achieved to make this extension of our services possible. An experienced team of volunteers from our Central Coast base has been organised, who along with our CEO Derryck, will work closely with our new Newcastle co-ordinator and volunteers to pass on their knowledge gained from the routines learned at our Wyong premises. One of our major strengths is that we are a community program, and our extension will enable Hunter donations to go directly to local Hunter children. I am confident that We Care Connect can make a significant impact in the Hunter region and many families will experience the quality and caring response to their needs that has become a significant indicator of our service.

Major steps have been undertaken in improving our IT system so that we can record in a timely manner the data we require. This information is then used to verify our progress and impact. We have established an IT Steering group, and with major input from volunteers, significant improvements have been achieved.

Another major Board focus has been relocating our Wyong base into more suitable premises. Our initial facility has served us well, but we have outgrown this warehouse and need a premise that better suits our needs, gives us a long-term lease and provides a more comfortable working environment for our volunteers. I am confident that the Board will be able to achieve this goal in 2023.

I commend the efforts of the Board as they have clearly aligned views that support the vision of CEO Derryck. Decisions taken at Board level are always made in relation to our strategic and budget plans and especially focus on how we can better meet the needs of those families that we are dedicated to assisting. I also commend the significant work in Partnership and Fundraising from Helen, whose wonderful efforts have contributed to the financial position that will ensure our viability and continued growth into the foreseeable future.

As a community program we rely heavily on the support of individuals, local organisations and businesses. We continue to receive tremendous generosity from all these supporters and the continued support and interest motivates us to meet the demands of as many families as possible.

I am sure 2023 will see continued growth and some wonderful goals achieved.

ROB DIXON CHAIRPERSON



CEO UPDATE

Derryck Klarkowski

This past year has been by far our busiest twelve-months ever, both for number of children we have supported, and the amazing community support we have received that has made this possible. In FY22 we supported 4114 vulnerable and disadvantaged children with outstanding community donations of over 120,000 items ranging from clothing to double prams!

This year has been bitter-sweet; the huge achievement our truly amazing volunteers and community supporters but at the same time the sadness at the high number of children in our community needing our support. We responded to Covid-19 by increasing the number of children we supported as more and more families struggled in the economic downturn. Our invaluable volunteers never wavered, and we never shut our doors.

Several highlights have been our Christmas and Back-to-School programs. For Christmas we supported 1130 children with approximately 7,000 gifts (on average 2 large, two small and several stocking fillers per child); 86 Christmas trees and 417 Christmas Hampers. Once again 95% of what we gave came from community donations – we have an outstanding Central Coast community.

Our Back-to-School program distributed 420 backpacks filled with school essentials, from Kindy to Year 12, to children who would have otherwise gone without. We know that a number of children returned to school directly as a result of this program – real ‘wow’ moments!

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and passion of our now over 50 wonderful volunteers, without our enormous community generosity and support, and without our amazing funders who have stood with us and shared our vision.

Thank you so much!

We have some wonderful new programs planned for FY23

Watch this space!

Thank you again

DERRYCK KLARKOWSKI CEO



WE CARE ABOUT LOCAL KIDS LIVING IN POVERTY

Our vision is to fundamentally reverse the day to day impact of childhood poverty in the Central Coast & Hunter - where over 30,000 children live below the poverty line.

We are a volunteer-run charity that connects local generosity with children who desperately deserve support. We firmly believe that having less doesn't mean being second best.

Our programs aim to restore safety, dignity and self worth to vulnerable children by providing them with great quality clothing, safe and warm bedding, essential equipment, and school or developmental items - all donated by generous community supporters.

Since 2016, our volunteer team has supported over 13,700 children distributing more than 359,500 items free of charge in partnership with over 80 family support programs.

Our goal is to provide every infant and child in the Central Coast and Hunter who needs it with a safe start to their life through community donated material aid.

“We care is amazing! I was this mum nearly 2yrs ago. Taken by police out of our home with nothing to a hidden safe house where we found 4 bags of love. 1 for myself, and 1 each for my children. They still have the hand crafted dolls we got. Thank you so much, forever grateful.”

Local recipient

HOW WE CARE

The simple act of giving to families in need is at the heart of everything we do



We care about making a difference to the lives of these families, to the lives of these kids.

Why? Because poverty is more than deprivation – poverty stunts children’s emotional and mental development creating a new cycle of poverty. Together we can change the story on childhood poverty for generations to come.

We care.

We give donations that make a difference. Our quality standard? “Would I be delighted to receive this for my child?”

We connect.

Partnering with professional caseworkers from community centres and family support agencies who provide individual requests for the families they are helping.

Our volunteers prepare support packages tailored to the family’s needs. Support can include clothes, nappies, bedding, cots, prams, car seats, toys, books and other essential items that families of young children need.

HOW WE HELP

We Care Connect runs several programs: **Begin Bright** supports infants from birth-2 years, **Girl/Boy** clothing programs for ages 2-10, **Youth Connect** (aged 11-17), and our **Sleep Through the Night** and **Play & Learn** programs which deliver safe and warm bedding and books, craft, school supplies, toys and birthday gifts for all age groups.

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

The We Care Volunteers are the beating heart and logistical work-force who sort, prepare and pack bundles of material aid for vulnerable Central Coast and Hunter kids.



THANK YOU

This year we took the opportunity to say thank you to a special group who've been volunteering for over 5 years.

They have been crucial to supporting well over 10,000 vulnerable children with the everyday essentials they deserve.

From the bottom of our hearts, Vicki, Sue, Mel, Wendy, Helen, Barb - thank you.



RYTA

**Wednesday Team
Co-ordinator, Toys,
All rounder**

Here's a bit of background into a few of our incredible volunteers

Been involved with We Care for - almost 4 years

Explain your job like you would to a child - I ensure that all toys are cleaned and tested. Making sure that the toy is as close to new as possible. As Team Co-ordinator, I support the wonderfully talented Wednesday Team, ensuring that all requests are ready for pick up by the case workers.

Favourite game - Monopoly and cross words.

Favourite movie - Heart & Soul

Favourite place in the We Care Base - Too hard to choose. Love it all!

Best part of your role - Knowing that we are making a difference in the lives of the families we support. Receiving feedback from case workers always makes me happy to know that another child didn't have to go without.

Any other interesting facts - I have a Maltese background. I love to cook and feed people.

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS



MICHELLE , BRENDON & KIM

Michelle: Pre-sorter/Back to School Co-ordinator/ Anywhere.

Brendon: Van driver, Fixit Man and general helper for anything the ladies need

Kim: Floater

Been involved with We Care for - about 2 years

Explain your job like you would to a child -

Michelle: Presorting of donations means sending items to the correct departments for further examination eg shoes, toys, books, clothing. Assisting with Coordination of our annual Back To School program providing backpacks chock full of school supplies to Caseworkers and their clients.

Brendon: I drive a big van and go to lots of places collecting all the donations of clothing, toys, cots, etc that go back to Base for sorting and cleaning. I also deliver orders to case workers. If I'm not driving I'm fixing cots or anything else around the building.

Kim: I support different areas where needed to sort and create our packs that we give to local kids in need

Favourite game -

Michelle: Pick Two and UNO

Brendon: Baseball/football and Sudoku

Kim: UNO or Yatzee!

Favourite movie -

Michelle: Pretty Woman or Dirty Dancing

Brendon: Anything Sci-Fi or Action

Kim: Any Marvel movie or The First of May

Favourite place in the We Care Base -

Michelle: Room 4 where all the donations come in... It's like an Aladdin's Cave full of surprises!!

Brendon: Everywhere

Kim: Love it all

Best part of your role - **Michelle:** Being a small piece of a huge team. I feel like we are elves in Santa's workshop, churning out parcels to put smiles on children's faces!

Brendon: Getting out and meeting people and knowing you've done something to help other people

Kim: Meeting all of the amazing men and women at We Care who welcomed me with open arms. (Sometimes I feel like I have a lot of mothers!)

Any other interesting facts - **Michelle:** I have been a Girl Guide on and off for 30 years, achieving a Queens Guide Award and Boronia Award for service to the community.

Brendon: I'm proud to be a cancer survivor

Kim: You won't find me everyday I just pop up when I'm needed!



THE WE CARE TEAM

Caring. Dedicated. Passionate. And a cup full of joy.

That's what makes our team of volunteers.

Our volunteers are the foundation of We Care Connect.

Led by volunteer CEO, Derryck Klarkowski, we have over 50 regular volunteers, who's dedication and passion throughout the last 12 months was truly inspiring. Our volunteers collect items, sort, wash and iron, clean, safety check, re-pack items. We introduced a 'Sunday Sort' once a month, so volunteers who can't access our week-day program still have the opportunity to give back.

Our volunteers liaise with case workers, other volunteers, Board members, funders and supporters alike. We cannot over-emphasise how appreciative we are, without our volunteers, we simply couldn't have the impact and support the large number of families that we do.

Our Supporters.

As a grassroots not-for-profit the contributions we receive from businesses, individuals and other organisations are critical for our operations.

**Central Coast Council
Coca Cola Foundation
Commonwealth Bank Foundation
Danks Trust
Doylo
Honig Foundation
Inner Wheel Australia
Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation
Share the Dignity
Sisters of Charity
Wyang Roos Foundation
Wyang Rugby League Club Group**

In Kind Supporters

Good 360, Streetsmart, The Nappy Collective, Thread Together, Warm Blankets for Everyone

To our community of fundraisers who've been out organising events, morning teas, Bunnings BBQs and donating to our appeals - **THANK YOU**

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers, supporters and funders



Mother's Day High Tea

We ran our second Mother's Day High Tea at Magenta Shores Golf Club. A big thank you to the 180 guests who purchased tickets, raffles and donated on the day to raise over \$21,000.



Wiseberry Real Estate's successful Winter Appeal

The team at Wiseberry ran an appeal to collect much needed winter essentials throughout June 2022. The response from the community was overwhelming with 37 bags and 145.8kgs of items donated by the community.



Inner Wheel's amazing community spirit!

The Inner Wheel Clubs of Gosford North and Tuggerah Lakes have been long-term and enthusiastic supporters. They raise funds for us, they buy incredible amounts of new toys, new clothes, bedding and special treats for our Christmas Hampers. Their gifted sewers have made thousands of the beautiful handmade bags for our care bundles.

Brendan's Share the Warmth Project

Year 11 Central Coast Sports College student Brendan's 'Share the Warmth' project made our hearts sing. Here's a note from Brendan about his project

"When I went to donate the clothes I had raised, I met a lovely group of volunteers who allowed me to volunteer for the day to help with sorting through clothes and seeing the process behind what they do. They really showed me the importance of what they do and the donations they receive which has made me want to make my Share the Warmth project as a regular tradition in the future to help those in need."

It is so encouraging to see young people like Brendan with such awareness, empathy and commitment to see an idea through

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Overall income for the FY22 year was \$376,244 and expenses were \$189,954. The timing of two large grants from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation and The Honig Foundation meant that income was received in FY22, and the expenses will be realised in FY23 as we launch our Hunter program.

INCOME
\$376,244
EXPENSES
\$189,954

We Care Connect also received an incredible asset donation from a large retailer in the form of gift cards that are being used to purchase much needed items.

On average it cost us \$42 to help a family with \$489 worth of value during the period. On average it cost us \$42 to help a family with \$489 worth of value during the period.



In a very uncertain time during another CoVid lockdown, we sustained a strong financial position. Whilst a number of our normal face-to-face fundraising activities couldn't occur, like Bunnings BBQs; we feel fortunate to have received great community financial support.



WE CARE BOARD

Robert Dixon
Chairperson 30/7/2019

Ariane Dixon
Director 30/7/2019

Jacqueline Klarkowski
Secretary 1/10/2018

John Davison
Director 1/10/2018

Nathan West
Treasurer 1/10/2018

Janice Smith
Director 1/10/2018



Thank you to Oddball Marketing for creating this annual report pro bono.



WE CARE

CONNECT

We are a growing community of passionate, local families who say no to childhood poverty. Contact us on the details below if you would like to join our village, we'd love to hear from you.

INFO@WECARECONNECT.ORG.AU
WECARECONNECT.ORG.AU

12