Children's Hospital Foundation

Your impact in 25/26

40 Years



Children's Hospital Foundation acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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A message from our CEO and Board Chair

On behalf of Children's Hospital Foundation, we are proud to share our 2025/26 Impact Report, highlighting the impact made possible by your support.

As we celebrate more than **40 years of impact**, we reflect on the extraordinary difference our community has made since 1985.

In that time, the Foundation has committed $271 million to improving paediatric healthcare. Together with Children's Health Queensland and our generous community, we have funded groundbreaking research, strengthened support services that wrap around some of our sickest and most critically injured children, and expanded access to care across our vast state. Together, these investments are helping create brighter futures for sick and injured children across Queensland and northern New South Wales.

> As we prepare to enter the final year of our FY24–FY28 Strategic Plan, we do so from a position of strength. We are making strong progress against our goals, with a number of milestones already achieved, including **growing our supporter base by 17% against a target of 7%, increasing donor retention to 66% against a target of 50%, achieving an average satisfaction rating of 4.7 out of 5 for our Impact Services, and increasing volunteer engagement to 98%, exceeding our target of 80%.**

The past twelve months also marked our first full year of implementing our Impact Strategy, providing a clear framework to guide our investments towards the areas where they can make the greatest difference. Through its four pillars, Excellence in Clinical Care, Research, Family and Patient Wellbeing, and Care Closer to Home, we are strengthening the connection between the generosity of our community and meaningful, measurable improvements in children's health and wellbeing.

A particular focus has been strengthening care closer to home for children and families from the Cape to the Tweed. Working alongside Children's Health Queensland and regional Hospital and Health Services, we have begun identifying opportunities for the Foundation to make a meaningful difference to access, patient and family experience, and health equity. This work builds on our longstanding support for children and families from across Queensland, while creating new opportunities to extend our impact closer to home, so more families can benefit from support in their own communities, no matter their postcode.

This year also saw the expansion and evolution of some of our most impactful programs supporting children and families at Queensland Children's Hospital. We



celebrated the relaunch of Paw Play support dogs, funded additional support for children undergoing burns treatment, and continued to grow our renowned music therapy program, which has been helping children heal for more than three decades.

We are incredibly proud of what has been achieved over the past year, but none of it happens without the generosity, trust and commitment of our community. Every donation, partnership, volunteer contribution and act of support helps us do more for sick and injured children and their families.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain focused on ensuring that children across Queensland & northern NSW have access to the care and support they need, while continuing to invest in research, services and programs that can improve children's health now and into the future.

Thank you for standing alongside us, and for helping give every Queensland child every chance to thrive.

With heartfelt thanks,

Dr Jane Black
Children's Hospital Foundation Board Chair

Lyndsey Rice
Children's Hospital Foundation CEO

Our vision

Every child has every chance to thrive.

Our purpose

We ignite and inspire generosity to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Impact performance in 2025/26

In 2025/26 the Children's Hospital Foundation celebrated 40 years of supporting Queensland children and families through research, care and wellbeing initiatives. This also marked the first full year of implementing the Children's Hospital Foundation's Impact Strategy 2026–2029, providing a clear framework to guide how we invest funds where they can create the greatest benefit for children and families.

Developed in partnership with Children's Health Queensland, the strategy focuses on four priority areas:



$271 million

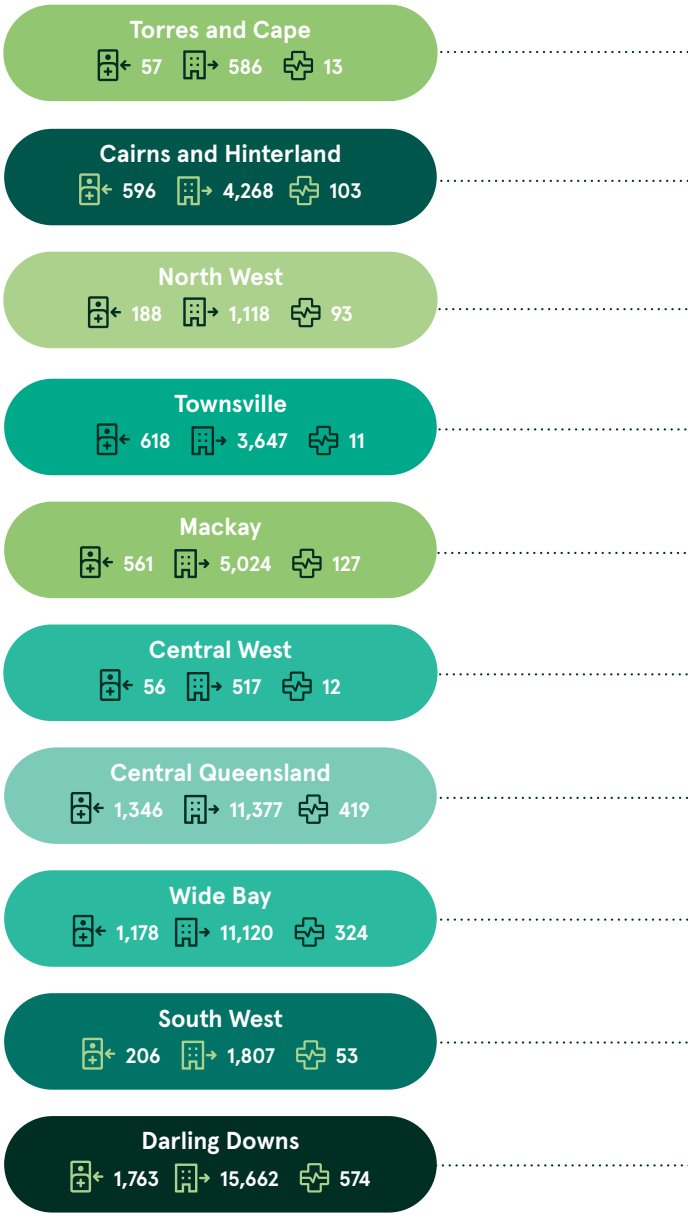
invested into direct impact for sick and critically injured children over 40 years

Here for every child from the Cape to the Tweed

Right now, one in three children travels from outside of Greater Brisbane to receive lifesaving care and treatment at Queensland Children's Hospital.

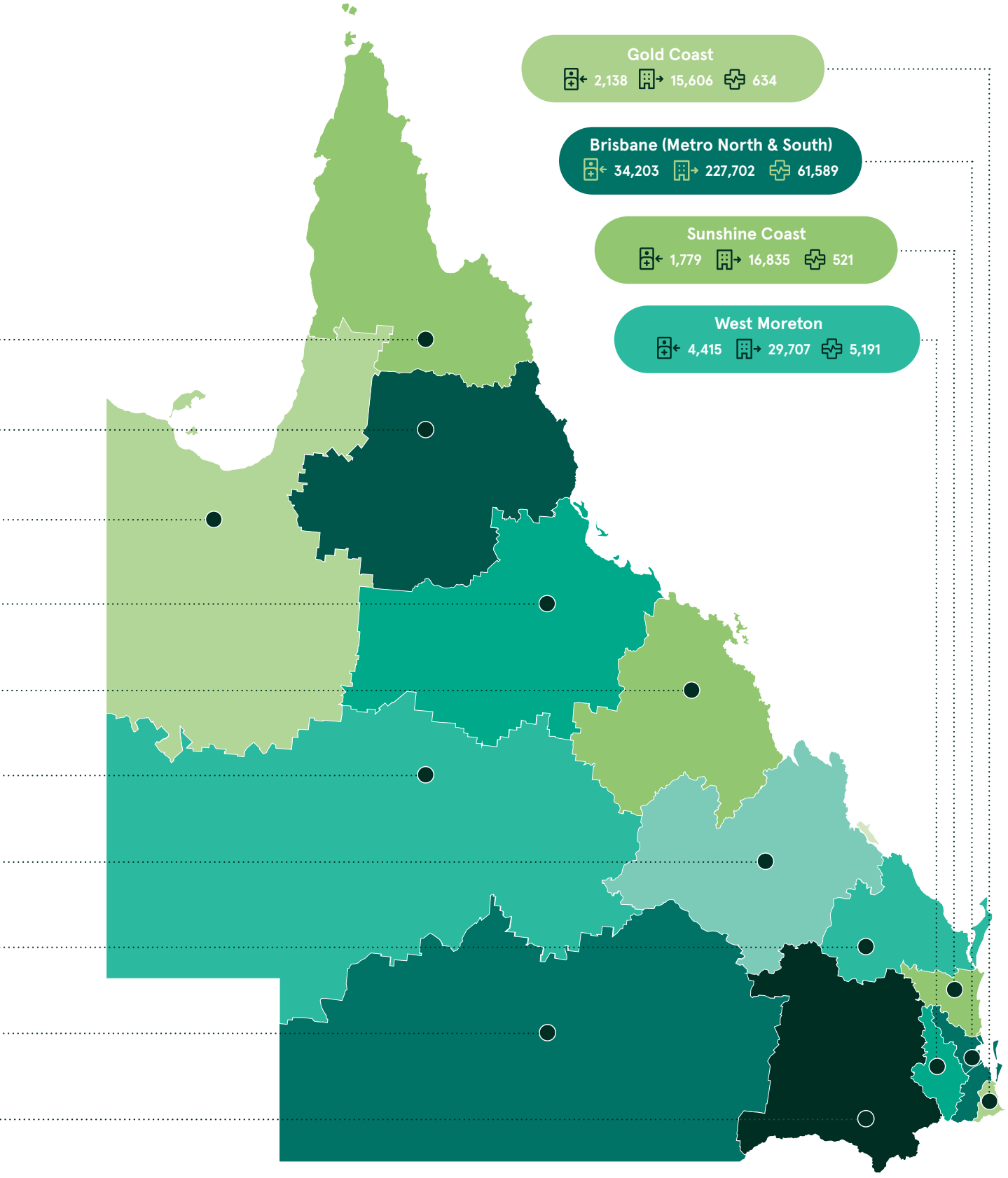
As our state continues to grow, so does the demand on our healthcare system. Queensland Children's Hospital has seen a 27% increase in demand for care since 2020.

Your support means we can continue to meet the evolving and complex needs within paediatric healthcare, ensuring every child – no matter their condition or postcode – is given every chance to thrive.



Key

- Inpatient admissions
- Outpatient appointments
- Emergency department presentations


Gold Coast
2,138
15,606
634
Brisbane (Metro North & South)
34,203
227,702
61,589
Sunshine Coast
1,779
16,835
521
West Moreton
4,415
29,707
5,191

40 Years of life-changing impact

1985

Royal Children's Hospital Foundation was established for the express purpose of raising funds for the benefit of sick Queensland children.

1988

The first Children's Nutrition Research Centre in the Southern Hemisphere was opened by the Foundation.

1993

Launch of the first music therapy program at the former Royal Children's Hospital, supported by the Foundation. The Foundation has continued to support the music therapy program since this time. This has become our longest-standing grant.

1999

Foundation volunteers began staffing the information desks, to assist families to navigate the hospital.

2005

The Foundation's Bravery Beads program was established to support long-term patients, rewarding their immense bravery during medical procedures.

2006

The Foundation's Cuddle Care program was launched. This program has been providing comforting support to babies and infants ever since.

2007

The Queensland Cerebral Palsy and Rehabilitation Research Centre was established at the hospital.

2008

The Foundation helped to establish the Queensland Children's Tumour Bank (QCTB) to support and promote research into childhood cancer. The Foundation is still supporting the QCTB today.

2019

The Foundation opened Kidzone, our dedicated play space offering child minding, bedside play, toy and digital loans library, emergency clothing and fun activities and workshops.

2019

The Foundation launches the Children's Brain Cancer Centre, investing $5 million over five years into Australia's first research initiative solely focused on paediatric brain cancer, treatment and survivorship.

2020

The Foundation invested $2.6 million into Australia's largest paediatric sepsis study, as a partner of the Medical Research Future Fund Genomics Health Futures Mission.

2021

A combined $5 million investment by the Foundation and the State Government funds the purchase of a state-of-the-art PET-CT scanner for Queensland Children's Hospital.

Established in 1985 as the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, the Children's Hospital Foundation has remained steadfast in its mission to improve the lives of sick kids across Queensland.

While the name has changed over the past 40 years, the purpose has not: to raise funds that support vital healthcare services for children with all illnesses, injuries and conditions.

The Foundation continues to invest in cutting-edge medical equipment, groundbreaking research and essential support services that make a tangible difference for children and their families during some of their most challenging times.

2001

The Foundation introduced its Working Wonders brand, encapsulating its vision to 'work wonders' for sick kids through medical research, equipment and services.

2002

With Foundation funding, the 'Bug Detectives' developed a world-leading one-hour test to diagnose meningococcal disease. This work has now saved countless lives worldwide.

2003

The Foundation began providing vital funding to the hospital's welfare team which supports vulnerable families in various ways, including parking and travel expenses, food vouchers, clothing, accommodation, bill payments and funeral costs.

2004

The Wonder Factory was established to provide a fun entertainment hub for patients and families. This included a dedicated TV studio and performance spaces for special guest visits, activities and workshops.

2012

The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation became the new Children's Hospital Foundation Queensland to help children across the state.

2014

Opening of the Queensland Children's Hospital (initially named Lady Cilento Children's Hospital), consolidating paediatric services in Brisbane. The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation became Children's Hospital Foundation.

2015

The Foundation helped to establish Juiced TV – the TV show made by kids, for kids in hospital.

2016

The Foundation helped to establish the Children's Health Queensland Bereavement Service, which continues to provide vital support to bereaved families.

2022

The Foundation launches the Ian Frazer Centre for Children's Immunotherapy Research. Committing $7.5 million to an Australian-first research centre, aiming to bring better treatment options to kids facing cancer.

2024

Celebration of the Queensland Children's Hospital's 10th anniversary, having treated over 472,000 patients and provided more than 3.6 million episodes of care.

2025

The Foundation introduces our Family Concierge program which offers tangible support to newly admitted inpatient families, providing them with necessary support and information to improve their hospital stay.

2025

The Foundation introduces our Paw Play program which is enabling dogs of all shapes and sizes to visit the hospital regularly and bring joy to patients, families and staff.

130,000 moments of connection and support

Because of you, our in-hospital Impact Programs at Queensland Children's Hospital delivered over 130,000 interactions with young patients and their families last financial year.

Through the delivery of our Impact Programs at the Queensland Children's Hospital and the Ellen Barron Family Centre, we create a safe space offering joyful moments that nurture connection, empower families and bring moments of happiness when they are needed most.

> **More than 90% of families who engage in our programs and services report feeling better supported and more connected to their child's care journey.**

Last year, our 130,000 interactions included:

6,974
craft packs distributed across inpatient units and outpatient clinics

2,247
items of clothing and toiletries provided to families in emergency situations

303
interactions with families at the Ellen Barron Family Centre

15,948
people engaged in events, activations and excursions

1,130
Hush Packs distributed to caregivers

430
bedside play visits for children confined to their rooms

3,936
cuddles through our Cuddle Care program

7,709
interactions through our Book Bunker

9,142
patients supported in the operating theatre waiting bay

6,615
patients supported in the operating theatre recovery bay

2,741
inpatient orientations conducted by our Family Concierge

47,997
families supported by our Wayfinder volunteers

434
children earned and collected Bravery Beads

8,660
frozen meals provided to caregivers

10,794
visits to our Kidzone playroom

797
interactions with Paw Play support dogs

26 years of supporting Queensland's sickest kids

In October 2025, we said farewell to a truly remarkable member of the volunteer team at Children's Hospital Foundation.



Friendly faces are essential to our work, and over the last 26 years, Margaret has been a comforting presence for children and their families in their time of need.

Joining us in 1999, Margaret worked in Patient Recovery and the Ellen Barron Family Centre before becoming a Wayfinder at Queensland Children's Hospital.

As a Wayfinder, Margaret was often the first smiling face families saw when they arrived, guiding them through the hospital with compassion, care and warmth.

"People are so grateful," Margaret says. "I've had parents get emotional just because I helped them find a teddy bear to comfort their child."

Known to families and staff for her kindness, reliability and genuine compassion, Margaret has touched countless lives throughout her work with the Foundation, leaving a lasting impact on families who walk through the doors of Queensland Children's Hospital.

At 85, Margaret has now retired as a Children's Hospital Foundation volunteer, although her commitment to the Foundation and supporting sick Queensland children has inspired the next generation.

Her daughter currently volunteers with the Foundation as a Wayfinder and holding bay volunteer, and her granddaughter (who is studying to be a doctor) is next in line.

> **"Thanks to the Foundation and to all the patient families for making my time as a volunteer so memorable. I would encourage anyone considering volunteering to stop thinking about it and just do it. The work the Foundation does is truly incredible, and I'm so glad I made the choice all those years ago."**
>
> Margaret, former Children's Hospital Foundation volunteer

A paw-sitive impact

Last November, Children's Hospital Foundation relaunched one of its most beloved programs, bringing the therapeutic and emotional benefits of support dogs back into the wards.

Each week, accredited dogs and their volunteer handlers make bedside visits across the wards at Queensland Children's Hospital, offering moments of connection, distraction and joy to children facing some of the toughest battles of their lives.



The reintroduction of the program follows strong demand from families and staff at the Queensland Children's Hospital, after the COVID-19 pandemic saw the previous outsourced program paused.

> **Since the program recommenced, Paw Play volunteer dogs have engaged in 797 interactions with children and their families, expanding from one support dog to eight, now visiting five days a week.**

Phase one of the Foundation's Paw Play program is currently underway, prioritising inpatient bedside visits, with plans to expand to support staff wellbeing, outpatient clinics and potentially community sites in future years.

Drawing Queenslanders together to support sick kids

Brisbane Powerhouse was transformed into a powerful public portrait of support for Queensland's sick and injured kids, led by Children's Hospital Foundation.

From 9 to 14 June, the Powerhouse lit up at night with drawings of home created by children receiving care at Queensland Children's Hospital and community supporters from across Queensland.

This activation formed part of the Foundation's statewide Help Make Hospital Feel More Like Home fundraising campaign. The campaign invited Queenslanders to share what "home" means to them, with selected artworks projected nightly onto the iconic riverside landmark.

The large-scale projection on Brisbane Powerhouse featured contributions from regional communities, families and children in hospital, alongside works from leading Australian artists, including Nick Caldwell and First Nations artist Tori-Jay Mordey creating a collective portrait of Queensland and the places people call home.

> **The project engaged Queenslanders of all ages, with more than 100 artworks submitted by contributors aged four to 89.**

Each artwork shared a personal depiction of home, from family traditions and favourite places, showcasing how different home can look for each individual.

Community art workshops in Warwick and Mackay brought more than 80 participants together to reflect on and express what home means to them, while more than 20 young patients contributed their own creations through the hospital's Kidzone art workshops thanks to our friends at Cosmic Dino Studio.

These individual contributions came together in the gallery-without-walls at Brisbane Powerhouse, transforming the landmark into a celebration of community connection and reaching an estimated audience of over 5,000 people across five nights.

This campaign's aim was to highlight that for so many families the hospital quickly becomes a home away from home, with one in three travelling from rural or remote Queensland – staying for days, weeks or even months.





For these families their lives are completely uprooted, leaving behind the security and comfort of home. This is where Children's Hospital Foundation comes in, helping make hospital feel more like home – providing comfort, connection and calm when families need it most.

In 2025 alone, Queensland Children's Hospital cared for 833 more rural and regional patients than the previous year – a 5.5% increase – highlighting the growing number of families leaving their homes and communities behind to access lifesaving care in Brisbane.

Children's Hospital Foundation CEO, Lyndsey Rice, said the campaign reflects the strength of communities coming together to support families facing long hospital stays.

"This project brings Queenslanders together in a very visible way, showing sick kids and their families that wherever they come from, their community is standing beside them," Ms Rice said.

"Through the support of the community, the Children's Hospital Foundation helps fund the wrap-around care that makes hospital feel more like home.

It's these moments of comfort, connection and normal childhood that help children and families get through some of the toughest times of their lives."



Thanks to our generous donors, this year's Tax Appeal raised

$304,738

Celebrating 20 years of Bike 4 Burns

In 2006, a dedicated group of first responders swapped their emergency vehicles for bikes and set out with a shared purpose: to help children with burns heal, grow and find hope. Today, Bike 4 Burns is one of Queensland's most enduring community-led fundraising events, supporting generations of young patients with burns.

In the last 20 years, Bike 4 Burns has raised over $1.2 million – helping fund vital research, specialist care and recovery support at Queensland Children's Hospital. Every kilometre ridden, every dollar donated and every night spent fundraising in regional towns has helped children not just survive burns – but recover, grow and thrive.

Bike 4 Burns is powered by an extraordinary volunteer committee made up of current and retired members of the Queensland Fire Department, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, State Emergency Service and dedicated community supporters.

Combined with the backing of the wider community, Bike 4 Burns has helped Children's Hospital Foundation fund research and equipment that has completely changed the paediatric burns treatment landscape, such as reducing the need for skin grafting in burns patients from 96% to just 2%.

> **This support is more than treatment. It's hope.**

The initiative has helped drive meaningful progress in burns care and recovery – supporting both the physical healing and the emotional wellbeing of children and young people living with burn injuries.

To mark the 20th anniversary of Bike 4 Burns, riders pedalled 800km from Bundaberg to Brisbane over eight days.

The finish line was symbolically set at Queensland Children's Hospital, where riders received a ceremonial welcome from family, supporters and hospital and Foundation staff.

> **"What the Bike 4 Burns community has built and achieved over the past two decades is remarkable. Their ongoing commitment has helped drive important advancements in burns treatment, while also supporting the wellbeing of children and families throughout their recovery."**
>
> Lyndsey Rice, Children's Hospital Foundation CEO

The bravery of Bike 4 Burns riders goes beyond their day jobs – it's the commitment to endure a challenging journey to help reshape recovery for children navigating one of their own.

We look forward to riding with you in 2027 – in spirit and in support!

For 20 years, funds raised by Bike 4 Burns have contributed to:

- Supporting world-leading research to improve scar management and recovery outcomes for children with burns.
- Delivering Camp OZ, an outdoor adventure program that helps young people build confidence, connection and resilience after burn injury.
- New colourful mural in hospital burns clinic to brighten clinical spaces for young patients.
- Funding Striving Deadly Scar Camp in Townsville, ensuring regional and First Nations children can access specialised recovery support closer to home.
- Introducing innovative wound-care approaches to support healing in acute paediatric burns.
- Expanding daily Clown Doctor visits in hospital burns clinic, using laughter and distraction to ease anxiety during treatment.

Thanks to Bike 4 Burns supporters, we raised an incredible

$122,413

for children with burns



Finding new ways to treat children with sepsis

Every day, children face infections that begin as something small and familiar, yet for some, can escalate into life-threatening emergencies. But thanks to you, there is growing hope.

Sepsis is the leading cause of death among infants and children worldwide. Early signs and symptoms of sepsis often mimic everyday childhood illnesses and infections – a cold, flu, tonsillitis, fever or cough – making it difficult for clinicians to distinguish between serious infection and sepsis during the first stages of illness.

Principal Research Fellow in Paediatric Infectious Diseases at The University of Queensland and Queensland Children's Hospital, Associate Professor Adam Irwin, is leading vital research to improve the early recognition of sepsis in children – ensuring sick kids receive the right treatment as early as possible.

Thanks to Children's Hospital Foundation funding, Dr Irwin and his team are using next-generation sequencing to rapidly identify bacteria in blood samples, helping clinicians distinguish sepsis from common infections and deliver faster, more targeted treatment.

"The most commonly recorded cause of serious preventable harm in hospitalised children is sepsis," stated Dr Irwin.

"Our approach, that Children's Hospital Foundation is funding, is testing whether we can detect the bacteria causing the serious infection in children more quickly than our established methods. Investing in this type of innovative research will improve the tools available to clinicians and parents to recognise sepsis in children, and when to treat promptly."

Dr Irwin's research also plays an important role in cancer treatment, as young cancer patients are at a higher risk of developing infections that can ultimately lead to sepsis.

With your support, the Foundation has proudly funded over $2.3 million into research that has deepened understanding of who is most affected by sepsis, how it impacts children and which risk factors matter most.





Power of play in paediatric health outcomes

In children's hospitals, much of a child's day is spent waiting. For a child, waiting stretches time and leaves fear with nowhere to go.

At the Queensland Children's Hospital, waiting is unavoidable. What changes is what fills the time.

From musicians and mascots to athletes and entertainers, our special guests arrive with one purpose: to bring joy, distraction and something to look forward to between appointments, procedures and the everyday moments of hospital life.

Research confirms what staff see every day: play-based distraction reduces anxiety and negative emotions in hospitalised children (Li et al., 2016). It also shapes how children and caregivers later remember the hospital.



Across 2025/26, the Children's Hospital Foundation facilitated 114 special guest visits, reaching 6,788 patients and their siblings.

Children will always wait in hospitals. But thanks to your generous donations, the wait doesn't have to be lonely.

References:

1. Li, W. H. C., Chung, J. O. K., Ho, K. Y., & Kwok, B. M. C. (2016). Play interventions to reduce anxiety and negative emotions in hospitalized children. BMC Pediatrics, 16, 36

A fun day for every month

Every month, our Foundation Fun Days transform hospital spaces into places of play, wonder and connection. Made possible by the generosity of our partners, these special events bring moments of joy to children and families when they need them most.

Here's a snapshot of the smiles and memories we've created.







National Families Week











Easter Eggstravaganza











Halloween Spooktacular



Thank you to our wonderful partners who helped bring special moments to hospital for patients and families in 2025/26:

- **Swyftx**
- **Blue Chip Talent and BOSCH**
- **JD Refrigerated Transport**

Mad about football!

When Queensland's rugby league community came together in 2026, supporters like you helped turn a love of the game into meaningful impact for children and families facing illness and injury.

The Children's Hospital Foundation was proud to become an official Brisbane Broncos Charity Partner in 2026, transforming match-day passion into meaningful support for sick and injured children across Queensland.

The Foundation also joined the NRL's inaugural Kick for a Cause campaign during Magic Round, connecting Queensland child ambassadors Ayden, Sienna, Summa and Finn with the Titans, Broncos, Cowboys and Dolphins.

From hospital visits and player meet-and-greets to unforgettable game-day experiences, these partnerships created moments of joy, connection and belonging for children and families facing some of life's toughest challenges.



Footy by numbers

5

Queensland child ambassadors connected with local NRL clubs

45,566

fans cheered on the 50/50 match at the Broncos game

150,000+

fans united and cheered on the child ambassadors during Magic Round - Kick for a Cause

16

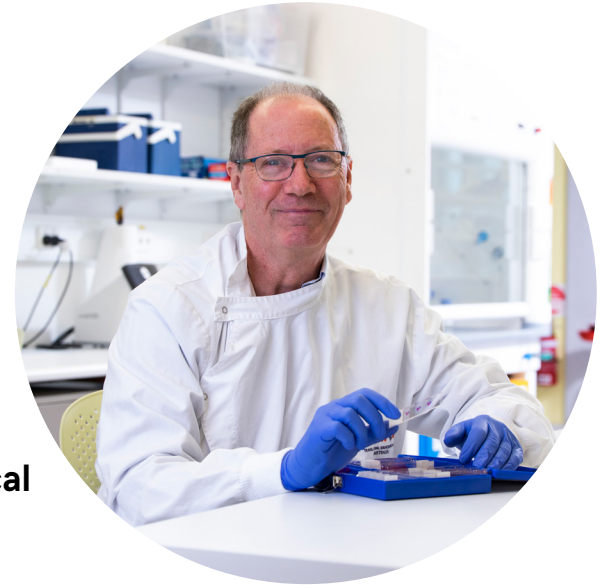
NRL clubs (nationally) involved in the inaugural national *Kick for a Cause* campaign

$7,280

worth of in-kind tickets distributed to sick and injured kids and their families to attend the Magic Round games

Your kindness helped raise $54,612 for Children's Hospital Foundation programs and services

Australian trial of personalised vaccines to treat children with deadly brain cancers



This year, phase one of a world-first clinical trial testing personalised cancer vaccines for children with advanced or treatment-resistant brain tumours was rolled out.

This research milestone was made possible through the support of Children's Hospital Foundation donors and partners.

Beginning in April 2026, trials are underway at eight paediatric hospitals across Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, giving families access to a potentially life-changing advancement.

Brain cancer kills more children in Australia than any other disease, and many existing treatments can leave survivors with lifelong physical, intellectual and health challenges. Through the Children's Brain Cancer Centre, researchers from Queensland and South Australia are working to change that, advancing the Australian Brain Cancer Mission's long-term goal of improving quality of life, doubling survival rates and ultimately defeating brain cancer.

Made possible through more than $1 million in Children's Hospital Foundation funding, alongside the support of The Lott by Golden Casket and donors across Queensland, this trial offers new hope for children facing aggressive and treatment-resistant brain tumours.

The study, co-led by The University of Queensland and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) in partnership with Providence Therapeutics, will provide personalised messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines tailored to each child's tumour.

Scientific lead, Professor Brandon Wainwright AM, Co-Director of the Children's Brain Cancer Centre, said personalised mRNA cancer vaccines had shown promising results in adults with rare and hard-to-treat cancers, including pancreatic cancer and melanoma.

"We are excited that after many years of research in our laboratory, we might offer a glimmer of hope for children with some of the most aggressive and treatment-resistant tumours," Professor Wainwright said.

"After identifying unique cancer markers in each child's tumour using genome sequencing and advanced data analysis, we will select tumour-specific vaccine targets," Professor Wainwright added.

> **"Customised vaccines for each child will then be manufactured in Queensland by Southern RNA and then sent to the trial sites for dosing."**

Sapphire Gala raises milestone $1,101,250

More Queensland children will soon be able to receive care closer to home, following the success of our 2026 Sapphire Gala, which raised a milestone $1,101,250.

Held under the night sky at Glo House in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, our 2026 Sapphire Gala brought together 240 supporters in a powerful show of generosity and commitment to children and their families across the state.

Sonia Kruger and Mike Goldman hosted the evening, which featured musical performances and all the sparkle that Sapphire is renowned for.

With the support of donors and partners at this year's Sapphire Gala, we are working to change that.









A heartfelt thank you to our Sapphire Committee members:

- Elizabeth Benson
- Jessica Sleswick
- Julia Davey
- Kate Greaves
- Matilda Klaebe
- Pete Cunningham
- Tim Benson



A legacy of real impact

When the right people come together behind a shared purpose, it can help change a child's future.

Philanthropy has been at the heart of Children's Hospital Foundation from the beginning.

Today, the Legacy Advisory is building on that history by bringing together a network of passionate Brisbane leaders who share a commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Over the past year, Legacy Advisory members contributed more than 400 volunteer hours – opening doors, sharing the Foundation's vision and creating opportunities for others to make a meaningful difference.

Our Legacy Advisory

Elsa Dalessio, Chair
Dirk Van Velden
Kylie Hart
Vlad Rosov
Brian Codd
Elia Hill
Kim Skubris
Jasmina Joldic
Steve Titmus
Adam Sarota
David McGuigan

Impact at a glance

$50,000
in prize and auction donations

400
volunteer hours contributed

Support
seed funding for Transport to Treatment

What Queensland kids wish for

Wishes from children in hospital can look different. Their wishes are not for toys or games. Their wishes are for courage, for answers and for more time.

The following wishes have been taken from our Wishing Tree at Queensland Children's Hospital. Real wishes from kids and families in hospital that you help make come true.




Message: HOPE EVERY1 FEEL great and Full OF JOY
From: Tristan
Children's Hospital Foundation
Message: I Hope no more kids get sick
From: George XXX
Children's Hospital Foundation
Message: I wish kids in the Hospital Feels Better
From: Tamara
Children's Hospital Foundation
Message: I hope everybody feels better and can smile
From: Imogen
Children's Hospital Foundation
Message: I wish for everyone to be loved and happy.
From: Peyton
Children's Hospital Foundation

Investing in the next generation

The future of children's health depends on great ideas, the people brave enough to pursue them and those willing to back them.

The future of children's health depends on great ideas, the people brave enough to pursue them and those willing to back them.

In 2025, Australian fashion brand DISSH reaffirmed its commitment to advancing women in paediatric research, extending its support of the Children's Hospital Foundation's Mary McConnel Career Boost Program for Women in Paediatric Research for an additional three-year term. With more than $1 million now committed across six years, the partnership is helping create opportunities for female clinician researchers whose work has the potential to improve the lives of children and families across Queensland and beyond.

The Mary McConnel Career Boost Program was established to support women at pivotal stages of their research careers, providing flexible funding, mentorship and professional development opportunities that help accelerate their research and leadership journeys.

In 2025, four outstanding researchers were awarded grants through the program.

- **A/Prof Jasneek Chawla** is focusing on optimising treatment for sleep disordered breathing in children with neurodisability.
- **Dr Trisha Soosay Raj** is committed to improving learning practices in paediatric oncology across the Pacific region.
- **Ms Tricia Kleidon** is exploring practice variation and outcomes of peripheral intravenous catheters and vein health across rural and tertiary paediatric healthcare settings.
- **Mrs Kristen Storey** is investigating the use of negative pressure wound therapy in acute paediatric burns.

Together, their research is helping address some of the most pressing challenges in children's healthcare, with the potential to improve treatment, patient experience and health outcomes for children and young people.

The program honours the legacy of Mary McConnel, whose leadership helped establish Queensland's first children's hospital in 1878. Today, her vision lives on through a new generation of women helping shape the future of children's health.

What sets the Mary McConnel Career Boost Program apart is its trust-based approach. Rather than prescribing how funding should be used, the program empowers recipients to determine where support will have the greatest impact on their career and research. Whether through protected research time, professional development, mentoring opportunities or practical support that helps balance competing responsibilities, the flexible funding model gives researchers the freedom to invest in the opportunities that matter most to them.

Since 2018, the program has invested more than $1.7 million in 35 female researchers, supporting breakthroughs and advances across a wide range of paediatric health priorities. Thanks to the continued commitment of DISSH, the Children's Hospital Foundation will continue backing talented women in research and helping turn promising ideas into better outcomes for children and families.

“An investment in one female researcher can accelerate a career, unlock new opportunities, attract further funding, generate new knowledge and ultimately improve outcomes for other women and girls.”

Lyndsey Rice, Children’s Hospital Foundation CEO

“The Mary McConnel Grant was much more than a research grant. It was an investment in my future as a research leader, and I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunities it created.”

Professor Amanda Ullman, Mary McConnel Career Boost Program inaugural recipient.



Introducing our 2025/26 Ambassador class

Meet those shining a light on the experiences of children and families seeking treatment at Queensland Children's Hospital, amplifying their voices and stories.

Our Ambassadors' dedication, compassion and advocacy help ensure that children across Queensland receive the best possible care and support.



Honorary Ambassador Lady Mayoress Nina Schrinner

At its heart, Children's Hospital Foundation reminds us that hope is rarely one grand gesture. Through compassion, generosity and a deep commitment to children and families, it creates moments of hope in circumstances that can often feel uncertain or overwhelming.

Working with Children's Hospital Foundation, I've seen firsthand the amazing impact their cause has. It's a Foundation with heart, and that's something that really aligns with me.



Chaydon Jay



Johnny & Kerry Balbuziente

We saw becoming Ambassadors as an opportunity to use our platform to make a real difference. If our contribution can make a child's day a little brighter or bring even a moment of hope during a difficult time, then it's incredibly worthwhile.

I believe this cause matters because every child matters. Being able to put a smile on their face and to have joyful moments makes a difference.



Budjerah

Through our time being Ambassadors with Children's Hospital Foundation, it's clear just how much these small moments of joy and distraction mean during what is an overwhelming and often isolating time for families.



Liam Talbot & Charli Robinson



Matty Acton

I love that Children's Hospital Foundation is about making the experience as good as it can be. Every kid deserves to have a wonderful childhood, and Children's Hospital Foundation is helping give those happy memories back to kids.

I know firsthand how much of a difference Children's Hospital Foundation makes to the lives of sick kids. Knowing that I can support them in any way means more than I can say.



Max Shearer



Will Ashcroft

Every kid deserves the chance to grow up healthy and chase their dreams, and the Foundation is helping make that happen for so many families.

As a Queenslander and a Dad, supporting kids and families in our community is something that is really important to me. This cause matters because every child deserves the best possible chance to be healthy, happy and enjoy being a kid.



Corey Oates



Marlo Grover

Raising awareness for Children's Hospital Foundation is important to me because I have been there myself, and I know what an impact this work can have on families and their sick kids. Sometimes it's the smallest gestures of help that mean the world.

As an Ambassador, I'm honoured to amplify the voices and stories of children and their beautiful families who really do need the community's support. Sharing their powerful stories is one way to inspire hope and encourage generosity that can have a life-changing impact.



Sarah Greenhalgh

A Madd night of generosity

This year, we marked a very special milestone at Children's Hospital Foundation – Queensland Children's Hospital's 10th birthday.

The funds will help ensure more children and families can access world-class healthcare, groundbreaking research and vital support when they need it most.

Among the night's speakers was Rebecca Reed, a parent to one of the patients at Queensland Children's Hospital and beneficiary of the support and services provided by Children's Hospital Foundation.

Bringing that impact to life was Rebecca Reed, whose family has seen firsthand how the support and services provided by the Foundation and the Madd Ball's fundraising make a difference in a child's hospital journey.

> **"The Madd Ball began with one simple goal: to bring people together through gratitude and giving. Since that first [Madd Ball] event, it has become something truly meaningful."**
>
> George Samios, Madd Loans Founder

In a show of appreciation for their ongoing support, Madd was inducted on the night into the Foundation's Hall of Fame.

Children's Hospital Foundation CEO, Lyndsey Rice, shared the Foundation's pride and appreciation for all the efforts Madd has provided over the years.

"This partnership provides a platform to engage Madd's stakeholders around a meaningful cause – to help kids with all illnesses, injuries and conditions," says Ms Rice.



Thanks to the generous supporters over

$640,000

has been raised since 2022

From oncology patient to changemaker



10-year-old ovarian cancer survivor, Myah, raised over $22,500 for a brand-new toy trolley for oncology patients supported by Children's Hospital Foundation.

Early last year, an ultrasound revealed a tumour measuring about 15 centimetres by 8 centimetres in Myah's abdomen, and she was diagnosed with an ovarian germ cell tumour – an extremely rare condition in children her age.

A week later, Myah began chemotherapy at Queensland Children's Hospital.

In between rounds of treatment and specialist appointments, Myah loved visiting the oncology ward's toy trolley, bringing moments of joy to difficult times.

It was those moments that inspired Myah to give back and help other children facing the unimaginable, raising an incredible $22,500 with her very own fundraiser.

Myah wants the funds to go towards her own toy trolley, "Myah's Toy Trolley" in the hospital's Oncology Ward keeping it stocked with toys, books and crafts for other children on the ward for years to come.

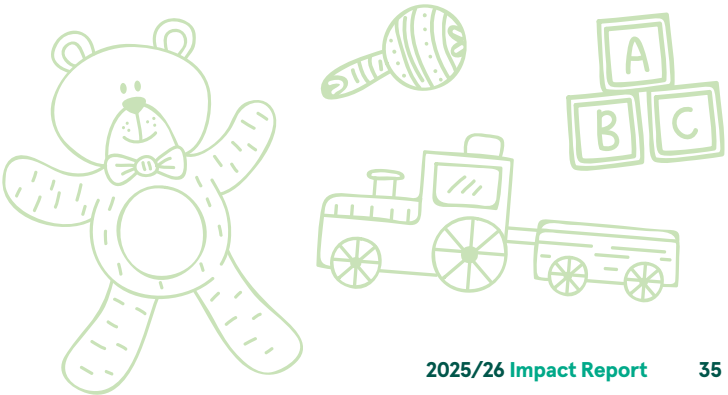
"After my own treatments, I got to visit the toy trolley, and it made me smile when everything else felt hard. Those little gifts reminded me that I wasn't alone and that people cared," says Myah.

> **"I hope my toy trolley helps kids going through treatment to feel brave, loved and a little less afraid. I just want to see as many people smile as possible."**

Today, Myah is cancer-free, but her impact will be felt for years to come. Through Myah's Toy Trolley, countless children facing treatment will receive small moments of comfort, distraction and joy during some of their hardest days.

Myah's story is a powerful reminder that philanthropy comes in many forms.

Whether it's a major gift, a community fundraiser or the determination of one remarkable young girl, every act of generosity helps create brighter hospital experiences for children and families when they need it most.



Building trust through Transport to Treatment

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, accessing specialist healthcare can mean travelling hundreds or even thousands of kilometres away from home, community and support networks.

Thanks to supporters like you, Children's Hospital Foundation and Children's Health Queensland's newly launched Transport to Treatment program commenced its service, ensuring children and families can access care with confidence, dignity and cultural safety.

Support in action

When a grandmother travelled from the remote Cape York community of Pormpuraaw to Brisbane to support her grandchild's treatment, she wasn't just leaving home. She was leaving behind her community, support network and everything familiar.

As a first-time visitor to Brisbane, navigating a major city, hospital appointments and temporary accommodation felt overwhelming. But thanks to the Children's Hospital Foundation and Children's Health Queensland's Transport to Treatment program, she didn't have to do it alone.

From the moment the family arrived, a dedicated bus driver and health worker provided practical and culturally safe support, helping them settle into accommodation, attend appointments and access everyday essentials throughout their stay.

While transport was the starting point, the impact went far beyond getting from A to B.

More than transport

- Access specialist healthcare closer to their appointments and treatment needs
- Navigate unfamiliar environments with confidence
- Access groceries and essential supplies while away from home
- Stay connected to support services and healthcare providers
- Focus on their child's care rather than the challenges of travel

Impact snapshot

12% of First Nations patients miss appointments, more than double the rate of non-Indigenous patients, often due to transport barriers.

3 dedicated, culturally safe transport vehicles funded through the program

1 goal: ensuring transport is never a barrier to healthcare.

Because of you, families can focus on their child's health, not the journey.



Redefining recovery with music

At Queensland Children's Hospital, music can be a therapeutic tool to support children's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing during their hospital journey.

For over 30 years, the Children's Hospital Foundation-funded music therapy program – one of the largest in Australia – has quietly transformed how children heal.

> **Now, the music therapy program is expanding in groundbreaking ways with a new, on-call procedural support model that's minimising pain, reducing trauma, and reshaping paediatric care – in real time.**

From needle procedures to rehab, music therapists use breathing, imagination and live music grounded in neuroscience to help kids feel safe, empowered and in control. T**his new model is an Australian first** and has already seen intake grow from **5% to 30%** – with measurable reductions in pain and distress.

Far more than simply playing music, qualified music therapists are university-trained clinicians who combine advanced musical skills with evidence-based knowledge of neuroscience, psychology and therapeutic practice to support a child's recovery and wellbeing.

Maggie James, Music Therapy Clinical Leader, says the program regularly **improves quality of life for children and families during difficult times.**

"Music has a unique ability to engage multiple areas of the brain simultaneously," says Mrs James. "It can help activate reward pathways, promote feelings of safety and connection, and support emotional regulation.

"Music therapy also provides a creative outlet for children to process their experiences through music-making, improvisation and songwriting. Some children write songs about their hospital journey, while others use instruments to express feelings of anger, sadness, fear or hope."

Last year, 13-year-old Lucy spent 17 days in a coma after a rare and sudden brain bleed. While unconscious in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at Queensland Children's Hospital, music therapists played live guitar at her bedside to help stimulate neurological responses. Her parents noticed an immediate response.

"Lucy's pulse rate and blood pressure were high, and to watch them just instantly drop as soon as the guitar started was just magical," says her dad, Anthony.

As Lucy woke and moved into rehabilitation, music therapy evolved with her treatment – helping support movement, coordination and cognition as she relearned how to walk and talk. When her parents brought in her guitar, Lucy surprised clinicians by playing the James Bond theme without assistance, helping unlock muscle memory her doctors were working to rebuild.



30 years of healing through music:

Over

9,000

children supported

78,000

hours of music-led healing (50 hours per week)

60,000+

sessions (2,000 in the last 5 years)

6

highly trained therapists, collaborating with rehab teams and Samford researchers

The music therapy program is the Foundation's longest-standing grant and has seen countless breakthroughs and life-changing health outcomes across the years.

Supporting families' financial needs

Last financial year, Children's Hospital Foundation committed $195,000 to help address the financial hardship of families with sick or injured children, enhancing family experiences and improving access to Queensland Children's Hospital to show support for brave young patients and their families who provide care.

Rising cost of living, medical expenses, accommodation and travel requirements all contribute to the financial stress families face when their children are sick or injured. As parents focus on their child's care and medical needs, other necessities can often be put to the side.

In partnership with the Children's Health Queensland Social Welfare team, the Family Financial Hardship Grant, which has been funded by the Foundation for over 20 years, supports families with limited income or access to funds across Queensland and northern New South Wales.

How the Family Financial Hardship Grant supported families in 2025/26

- Accommodation **4%**
- Travel (flights and trains) **1%**
- Woolworths vouchers **25%**
- Final farewell (funeral costs) **16%**
- Parking **16%**
- Fuel cards and bills **13%**
- Taxis **13%**
- Food services **12%**



A season of giving and hope



Most children wish for toys, games and presents at Christmas. But for the more than 4,000 children receiving treatment at Queensland Children's Hospital throughout December, Christmas wishes often look very different.

These wishes go beyond what sits under the tree, reaching into the heart of what matters most: relief from pain, a breakthrough treatment, more time with loved ones, or simply the chance to be home for Christmas.

Our 2025 Christmas Appeal, A Wish for Christmas, brought Queenslanders together to deliver hope, comfort and moments of joy to children and families spending the festive season in hospital.

Together, our generous donors, partners and supporters brought hope, connection and joy to children and families spending Christmas in hospital, reminding them they were surrounded by a community that cared.

The magic behind the wishes

- $739,000 contributed by long-standing corporate partners, ALH Hotels and BIG W $214,000 raised through our Christmas Appeal
- $6,000 in donated toys for teenagers in hospital
- Santa photos, toy sorting and family activities delivered by dedicated volunteers
- Special festive experiences, including gingerbread-decorating events, helping create moments of joy for families spending Christmas in hospital



Caring for those who care for our sick kids



Every day, thousands of staff across Children's Health Queensland show up for children and families when they need them most, delivering world-class healthcare.

So it was without question that we made a plan to give back, show thanks and let Queensland paediatric healthcare workers know they're seen, heard and valued.

Working closely with Children's Health Queensland's Culture and Leadership team, the Foundation delivers opportunities throughout the year to recognise and thank staff for the extraordinary work they do.

Whether based at Queensland Children's Hospital or supporting families in communities across the state, we're showing support in ways that matter to them.

Thank you to our partners and sponsors for helping us bring this initiative to life and give back.

While the impact of these moments may be simple, their message is powerful: the people who care for Queensland's children deserve to feel cared for too.

Staff support at a glance

- 19 staff activations delivered, including late-night pizza delivery, spa experiences and free lunches and coffee
- 8,320 staff reached across Queensland
- Exclusive retail discounts and offers available through Foundation partnerships

A million reasons to keep walking

On 25 October 2025, 1,671 participants stepped into the night to support Queensland's sick and injured children through the inaugural All Night Long event.

Taking on a 42km overnight walk, participants journeyed alongside families, carers, healthcare professionals, researchers and supporters, united by a shared commitment to improving the lives of children facing serious illness and injury.

Starting at Parliament House at dusk, the route wound through Brisbane, with pit stops at iconic locations including New Farm Park and South Brisbane House. The sold-out event was delivered in partnership between Children's Hospital Foundation and Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland, bringing together an extraordinary community of supporters for a night of endurance, connection and generosity.

$49,362.85 raised by the highest fundraising team walking All Night Long!



By the numbers

1,671
participants

362
teams

$1.2
million raised

120+
volunteers

39
hospital staff registered

2
charities coming together - an Australian first

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