

About us

The Aussie Hands Foundation is a voluntary not-for-profit organisation of parents, carers, associated professionals and other interested people. Our objectives are to:

- support children and adults who have been born with a hand difference and those who have an acquired hand injury
- provide opportunities for networking and exchange of information
- support research initiatives focusing on congenital hand anomalies

How we help

We are active in each capital city and have services and support for members nationwide. Rural and regional members can access information from their state body.

Our website has links to resources and opportunities to meet others who have a hand difference.

Our Supporters

Aussie Hands gratefully acknowledges funding from our supporters:














- membership
- fundraising
- donations
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- City of Melbourne
- Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- Nuttellex
- The Department of Human Services, Victoria
- The Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Victoria
- The Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund, Melbourne, Victoria
- The Sentinel Foundation



Photography: Graham Bradtke

Types of hand differences

Below is a list of Congenital Hand Anomalies Terminology

-  **Adactyly:** Absence of all fingers and thumb
-  **Amniotic Band Syndrome (ABS) or Constriction Ring Syndrome:** Constriction of fingers or thumb by amniotic band(s)
-  **Aplasia:** Absence of specific bones and parts
-  **Arthrogryposis:** "Curved" stiff joints
-  **Brachydactyly:** Short finger or thumb
-  **Camptodactyly:** Curvature in flexor (palmar-dorsal) plane of finger
-  **Clinodactyly:** Deviation in lateral (radial-ulnar) plane of finger or thumb
-  **Dysplasia:** Abnormal development of bones and parts
-  **Ectrodactyly:** Cleft hand with missing central finger(s)
-  **Hypoplasia:** Under development of bones and parts
-  **Macroductyly:** Overgrown finger or thumb
-  **Poland Syndrome:** Underdevelopment of the hand and chest muscles
-  **Polydactyly:** More than normal number of fingers or thumbs
-  **Symbrachydactyly:** Under developed hand with central finger deficiencies
-  **Symphalangism:** Stiff fingers or thumb from fusion of bones
-  **Syndactyly:** Webbed fingers or thumb
-  **Synostosis:** Bone fusion
-  **Vacterl:** A non-random association of birth defects including hand difference

Connect with us

We welcome your involvement

Web: www.aussiehands.org

Email: info@aussiehands.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/4862914717/



Aussie Hands

Supporting Australians who have a hand difference



www.aussiehands.org

ABN 89 943 801 490

Who we are

The Aussie Hands Foundation is a voluntary not-for-profit organisation of parents, carers, associated professionals and other interested people. We provide support, understanding and encouragement to individuals with a hand difference.

Each year Aussie Hands:

- hosts social gatherings and organises programs to help reduce the isolation experienced by children, their parents and families. These activities enable members to build supportive relationships and self-confidence
- provides a forum where parents can ask questions, receive support and gain a sense of hope about their child's future
- provides up-to-date information about prosthetics, aids and counselling services
- supports families making difficult decisions about surgical procedures
- raises awareness about hand differences within the community and to support research initiatives focusing on congenital hand abnormalities



Belinda with daughter Evie. Shelly Hood Photography (above and cover)

Our members and their stories

Julie's story – I have a hand difference

I was born without any fingers, other than a small thumb, on my left hand – 'symbrachydactyly'.

I have always been a determined person, always up for a challenge and definitely not the type to ask for help! Growing up, my parents encouraged me to participate in many sporting activities and I found that when given my own space and time, I could adapt to pretty much any sporting pursuit. I also learnt to play the piano and the guitar playing left handed just like Paul McCartney.

It wasn't always easy growing up being "different" and I experienced a fair few challenges. During these years, I wish that an organisation like Aussie Hands had been in existence. It is fantastic to meet people who are just like you.

After finishing school, I studied social work followed by a Masters in Art Therapy. I have not found my hand difference to be an issue at work, in fact being 'different' has been a gift. It enables me to understand and forge meaningful relationships with the clients I assist through my work.

Julie, age 36

Belinda's story – my child has a hand difference

When we found out we were pregnant with our second child, we were thrilled. Our happiness soon turned to sadness and concern, when at our 20 weeks scan, we were told our baby had no left hand. This was not something we had even considered could happen and we were left with so many questions that couldn't be answered.

Living in a small country town, we were very limited with information, and it wasn't until Evangeline was 5 days old that we were able to see a specialist at Royal Children's Hospital.

We were told that her condition was called symbrachydactyly, that she wasn't the only one and best of all it wasn't something that we had done wrong.

It was also at this first appointment that we were handed an Aussie Hands Foundation brochure. We were able to be a part of a group of people who all had, or knew someone, who had the same condition.

We consider Aussie Hands our second family and do what we can to be involved. Evie is a bright, bubbly child who will now thrive given the support of Aussie Hands.

Michael's story – I have a hand difference

I was born with four undeveloped fingers on my left hand. When I was two and a half, I had a toe transplant at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. They removed the second toe from my left foot and stitched it to one of my knuckles so that I could grip things with my left hand.

When I was three I started at an Early Learning Centre. I was asked a lot about why my hand was different. My mum remembers that I would confidently say "I was born like that and I like it".

When I met Elouise through Aussie Hands she gave me all the confidence and resilience I need to live my life.

I am now 13 and I love school. My favourite subjects are Maths, Science, English and Sport. Sport is by far my favourite. My two main sports are football and basketball. I also compete for my school in athletics. Football is my favourite sport and this year I was the Captain as well as Best and Fairest for the under 13's side in Mitcham. I also like technology, for my birthday I constructed my own computer and I can comfortably type using my left hand. Just recently I took up the guitar, it's loads of fun. I haven't had any difficulties playing with my left hand as I have learnt to adapt.

What I like is that my friends don't make a big deal about my hand. Sometimes they don't even notice it.

Michael, age 13

