



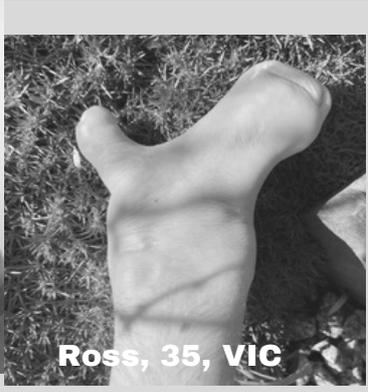
**Jason, 50, SA**



**Lana, 29, NT**



**DL, 23, 29, NT**



**Ross, 35, VIC**



**Skyla, 4, WA**



**Adrian, 2, NSW**



**Jackson, 5, NSW**



**Amanda, 48, TAS**



**Elizabeth, 3.5, QLD**



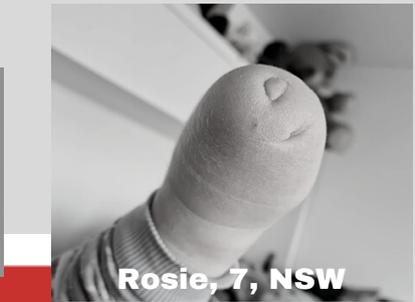
**Zac, 13, NSW**



**Issac, 8, SA**



**Kellie, 42, VIC**



**Rosie, 7, NSW**



**Dave, 23, NT**



**Miami-Jade, 13, QLD**



**Stuart, 41, ACT**



**Riley, 5, WA**



**Sue, 56, GLD**



**Karen, 61, VIC**



**Angel, 14, WA**



**Evelyn, 2, WA**



**Nola, 3mths, VIC**



**Craig, 45, VIC**



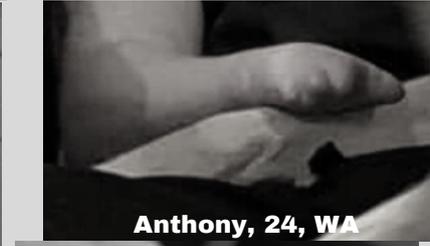
**Baylee, 6, WA**



**Tahlia, 11, VIC**



**Emi, 36, QLD**



**Anthony, 24, WA**



**Ché, 18 mths, UK**



**Jess, 12, VIC**



**William, 4 mths, VIC**



**Ben, 20, WA**

**Annual Report  
July 2021 – June 2022**

**Vision**

The Aussie Hands Foundation exists to provide support, understanding and encouragement to individuals with a hand/limb difference and their families.

**Purpose**

Aussie Hands achieves this through:

- Supporting individuals with a hand/limb difference, their families and community
- Providing opportunities for connection, networking and sharing of information
- Raising awareness and celebrating achievements of people with a hand/limb difference
- Supporting research into hand/limb differences by co-founding the Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR)

**Highlights**

- Through the ICB Project Grant we launched our Resource Toolkit which includes lived experience stories, expert information, tips and services to empower, enable and facilitate the inclusion of people with a hand/limb difference and their families. Items include – Finding Out (Expecting or new parent), Getting Connected with the right support network, Starting School, Making Friends, Self-care, Role Models and Feeling Good. - [Aussie Hands Resource Toolkit](#)
- We launched our Peer Support Network which connects individuals with a hand/limb difference and their families to people who have lived through similar experiences. The peer mentor support can be offered to discuss specific topics with the best suited mentor, or just to connect with likeminded people. - [Aussie Hands Peer Support Network](#)
- We changed our membership database from CiviCRM to a more accessible and user-friendly system. We merged all emails domains across to Office 365, with the help and support of our board member Bruno Gortan.
- We heard some inspiring stories from our members [Aussie Hands Stories](#) and we featured on ABC News, Channel 7 and in The Source Publication.
- Melbourne's own Montrose Primary School amazingly raised \$1,469 in gold coin donations from a social service fundraiser held in August – a movement to support Aussie Hands by each student filling a sock with spare change from their households.

- Our Board President Stuart John became the first para rower to win a Rowing ACT Wintertime Trial series trophy, with his win in the Mark Kwiatkowski Cup.
- Aussie Hands member Knox Gibson starred in a short film called *Forgive Us Our Trespasses*, which premiered on Netflix in February.
- Aussie Hands brought two souls together with plenty in common. Both born with seven fingers and both left-handed, with the want to help grow and build Aussie Hands. - [Dave and Lana's Story](#)

## Reflections

The coronavirus pandemic touched all our lives. Aussie Hands priority was to sustain the connection of members between one another, and we were able to do this by increasing our exposure and following on our social media platforms and the introduction of the peer mentoring programme.

There was a period of hibernation, and time to reflect on the feeling of uncertainty for Aussie Hands due to the inability to hold face to face events and bring families together to share physical connection and experiences. There were reduced volunteer activities because of economic circumstances, and families were focussed much more on their own challenges during this time.

We were able to close out the financial year with our ICB Project (Resource Toolkit and Peer Support Network) in June 2022, but there was an impact on being able to source new and additional government funded projects and initiatives. We are now looking at alternative ways of sustaining the operations of The Aussie Hands Foundation Inc.

## Patron's Report

As Patron of Aussie Hands, I am so proud to see the continued success of this incredible organisation.

As we celebrate another year of Aussie Hands, I wanted to reflect on the incredible community we have created and the sense of safety and familiarity that I feel every time I see stories being shared on social media by our members and volunteers.

The Aussie Hands community is a community like no other, together we create a union and bond that permeates geographical locations. I've been based in Dubai for 3 years, and yet the Aussie Hands community will always be such a significant link to Australia.

It is because of our members and the dedication of the Aussie Hands volunteers that we continue to grow, and in doing so, touch the lives of so many people both in Australia and around the world.

Thank you to each and every one of you that tirelessly contributes for the purpose of positively impacting the lives of others.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Smith OAM PLY



Paralympian - Speaker - Author

**Jessica Smith OAM PLY**  
Chief Operating Officer



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Media City, Dubai, UAE

Website: [www.jessicasmith.com.au](http://www.jessicasmith.com.au)

Website: [www.touch-dubai.com](http://www.touch-dubai.com)

## President's Report

Looking back on 2022 it has certainly been an interesting year, with plenty of challenges thrown our way. While a combination of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and a difficult flu season have made hosting events difficult, online The Aussie Hands Foundation has managed to achieve plenty.



The Aussie Hands Resource Toolkit and Peer Support Network went live this year, providing people with a limb difference and their families tools to help them through what can be some difficult situations and scenarios. If you haven't looked at either the [Resource Toolkit](#) or [Peer Support Network](#), then I highly encourage you to do so – I know that growing up with a limb difference having these resources would have made a world of difference to myself and my family. Likewise, I would have loved the opportunity to be mentored by someone with a limb difference and to know that I wasn't alone.

These resources don't get developed without a lot of hard work. I would like to thank our Steering Committee of Brooke Young (Chair), Fiona Passmore, Hannah Cole, Karen Macdonald, Lisa Robin, Robyn Antill and Samantha Donaghey for their efforts in getting the project up and running. I'd also like to thank Project Manager Jacqueline Banki, Project Officer Cassie Muller, and Digital Communications Officer Vinnie Chen for their work on the project; I know each of them went above and beyond to ensure that everything went to plan.

Aussie Hands and Aussie Hands members featured in national media in 2022. Aussie Hands member Knox Gibson featured in the short film *Forgive Us Our Trespasses*, which premiered on Netflix in February. While this is a difficult film to watch and is certainly not for everyone, it does tell an important story of Nazi Germany's attitudes to people with a disability. Knox also featured along with Ayelet Marha in a story by ABC News Disability Reporter Elizabeth Wright, who herself has a limb difference.

Behind the scenes The Aussie Hands Foundation Board of Management have gotten through a mountain of work, making some behind-the-scenes changes that will set us up for future success. I would like to thank Bruno Gortan, Dave Serpell, Elizabeth Borg, Fiona Passmore, Hannah Cole, Kate Grey and Steve Powis for their efforts over the last 12 months, as well as our leadership team of Karen Macdonald (Vice-President), Robyn Antill (Treasurer) and Lana Mitchell (Secretary), without whom I would be well and truly lost. I'd also like to thank our interstate coordinators and volunteers who help make meetups, do the write-ups, and keep the Aussie Hands store running. We quite literally can't do what we do without everyone pulling together!

*Stuart John*

**Board of Management**

Mr Stuart John	President
Ms Karen Macdonald	Vice President
Ms Robyn Antill	Treasurer
Ms Lana Mitchell	Secretary
Ms Elizabeth Borg	Founder / Board Member
Mr Dave Serpell	Board Member
Mrs Fiona Passmore	Board Member
Ms Hannah Cole	Board Member
Ms Kate-Louise Grey	Board Member
Mr Bruno Gortan	Board Member
Mr Steve Powis	Board Member

**Date of Board Meetings****2021**

27<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
10<sup>th</sup> November 2021  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**2022**

8<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
16<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
1<sup>st</sup> June 2022  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
14<sup>th</sup> September 2022  
24<sup>th</sup> October 2022

## Membership Summary

As of June 2022, there were 1571 Aussie Hands members.

State/Territory	2022
ACT	22 members 4 Household 18 Individual
VIC	280 members 87 Household. 193 Individual
NSW	210 members 43 Household 145 Individual
WA	93 members 18 Household 75 Individual
NT	5 members 2 Household
SA	43 members 3 Household 36 Individual
TAS	34 members 8 Household 21 Individual
QLD	146 members 19 Household 113 Individual
Overseas	42 members.



### Finances

Acknowledgement and thanks given to Edwin Taitz, EzyAccounts for his service as Finance Officer, who has provided services to Aussie Hands from July 2016.

FY 2021 - 2022 Finances

Summary of Operations

An acknowledgement and thanks to Independent Auditor Mathew Simon (Registered CPA No: 9527342), for Mathew's dedication and ten-year service on a pro bono basis to Aussie Hands.

In summary, for the year ended 30 June 2022:

Total Revenue \$75,150.00

Total Expenses \$97,948.00

## FY 21-22 Finances

### Summary of Operations

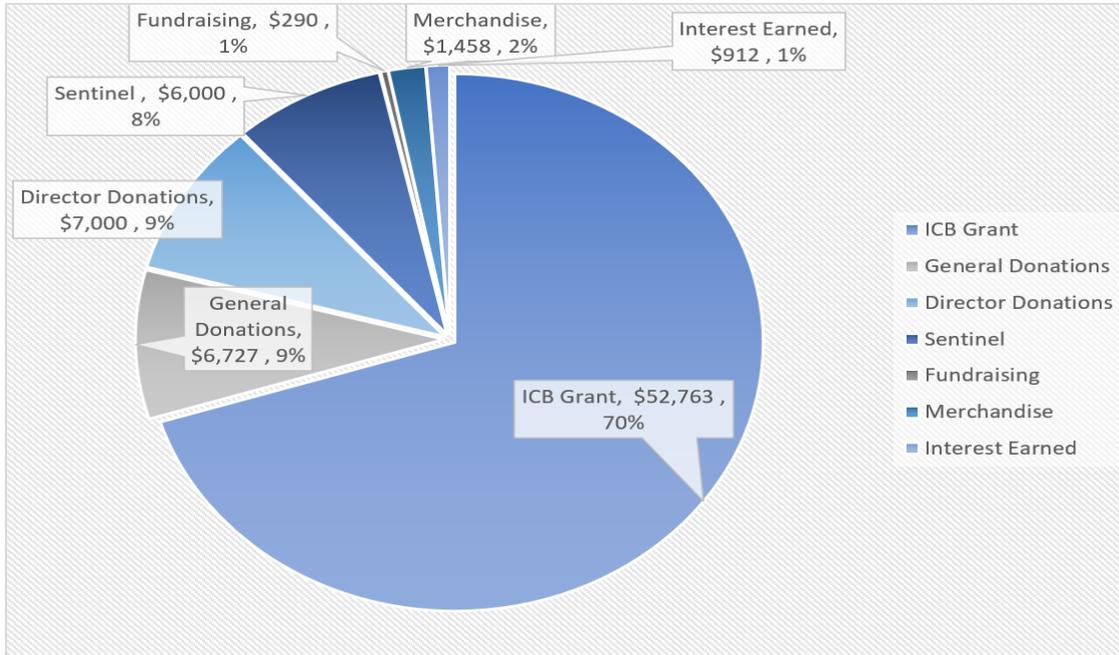
	(in \$000s, rounded)	21-22	20-21
<b>Revenue</b>	Grants Received <small>ICB</small>	52.8	<small>ICB</small> 50.3
	Donations	20.0	17.6
	Government Stimulus	-	10.0
	Merchandise/Interest	2.4	1.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>75.2</b>	<b>79.5</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	ICB Grant	76.0	14.4
	Aussie Hands	21.9	49.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>97.9</b>	<b>69.7</b>
<b>Surplus/ Deficit</b>		<b>(22.8)</b>	<b>9.8</b>
<b>Member Funds</b>		<b>50.9</b>	<b>73.7</b>



Total Revenue by Source

## FY 21-22 Revenue by Source

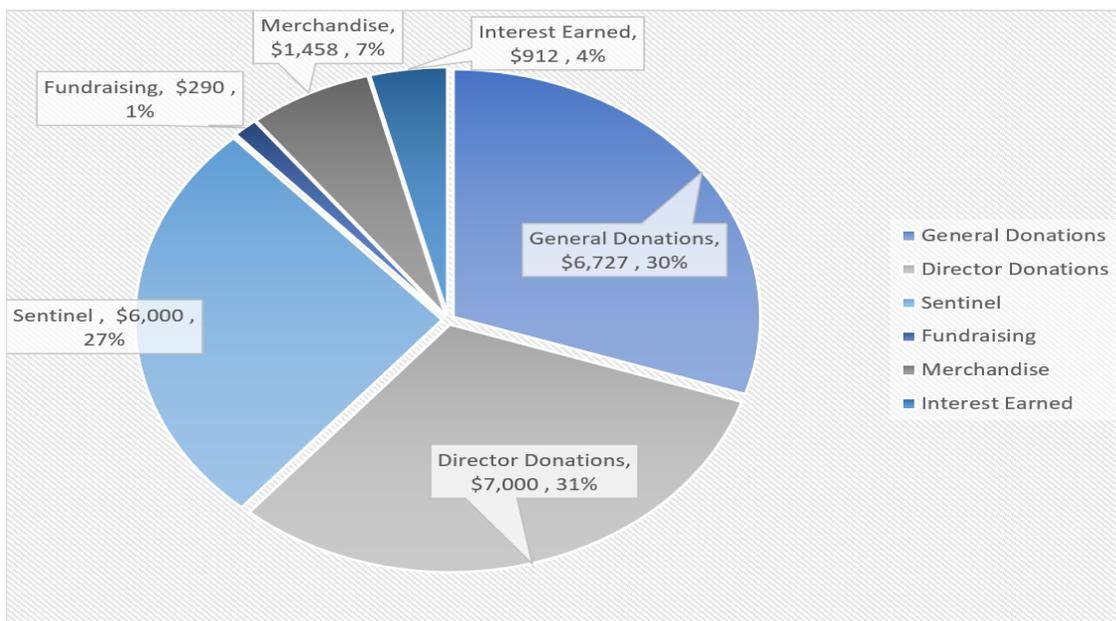
**Total \$75,150**



Total Revenue Excluding ICB Grant

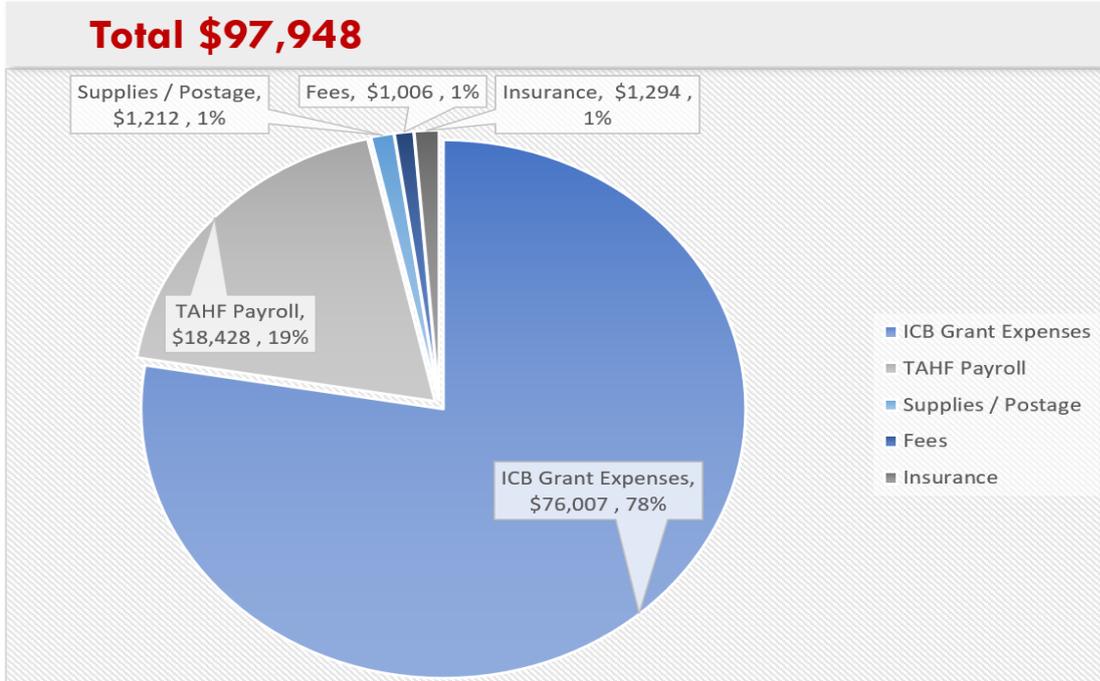
## FY 21-22 Revenue excluding ICB Grant

**Total \$22,388**



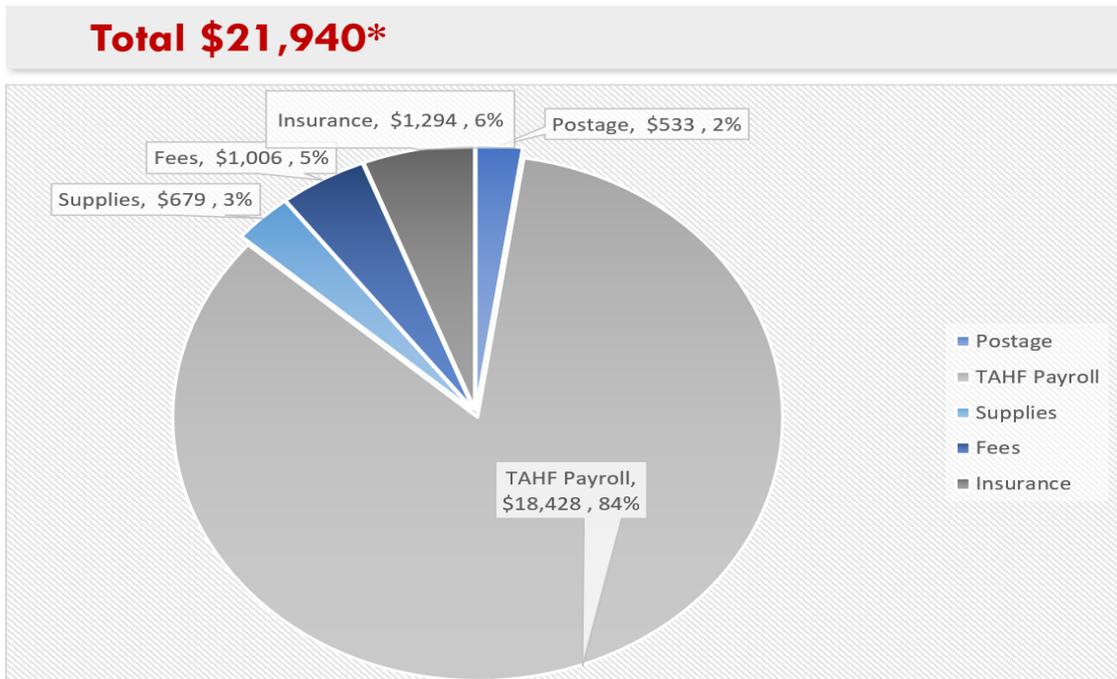
Total Expenditure

## FY 21-22 Expenditure



Expenditure Excluding ICB Grant

## FY 21-22 Expenditure excluding ICB Grant



## **Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR)**

Since commencing in mid-2017, the AHDR now has over 2230 children who were born with a hand/arm difference participating from Children's Hospitals across Australia.

The Register aims to:

- Find out how many children are born with a hand/arm difference in Australia
- Learn more about possible causes and risk factors
- Gain information to help plan services
- Identify possible participants for future research

A congenital upper limb difference is a hand or arm difference that is present at birth. An upper limb difference is present in approximately 0.2% or 1 in 600 of babies born. Sometimes it is detected by ultrasound before birth, but more often it is not found until the birth of the baby. Head of Hand and Microvascular surgery at Royal Children's Hospital, Associate Professor David McCombe said: 'In most cases, the cause is not known but with ongoing research we are learning more about the development of the limbs and what happens in congenital differences.'

'The AHDR is a vital tool that will help us better inform children with a congenital difference and their families. Through the AHDR we are developing a national collaborative research network that we are confident will give us answers to questions about causes and outcomes. As clinicians we would encourage as many families to participate and support the AHDR as much as possible,' added Associate Professor McCombe.

The Register is managed by researchers at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, located at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, and includes children from NSW, QLD, SA & WA – with more recruitment planned. The Register has been funded to date by support from The Aussie Hands Foundation Inc, The Australasian Foundation for Plastic Surgery, and the McNally Foundation.

Further information on the AHDR can be accessed at <https://www.mcri.edu.au/ahdr>

## Donors and Sponsors

A special thanks to Sentinel Foundation for a decade of their donation and dedication to The Aussie Hands Foundation Inc.

Acknowledgement and thanks to Aussie Hands ongoing donors and sponsors.

Alexandra Coutts	Krystal Bronte
Alison Stafford	Lan Aquilina
Annette Smeaton	Linda Turpin
Anthony Alexander and Eve Gallagher	Lucy Vardy
Anthony Hageman	Marcia Strachan
Bianca Thornton	Marwan Toma
Carmit Harnik Saar	Megan Fulko
Carole Pilling	Melanie Evans
Damian Wright Music	Michele Aldous
Elizabeth Louise Borg	Montrose Primary School
Emma Hartmann	Naomi Spakman
Englisi Farsi	Nick and Kerrie Mackenzie
Hannah Forteach	Nicola McVeigh
Hannah Savaiinaea	Robyn Antill
Hanqing Zheng	Sarah Gladish
Helen and Rocco Vallelonga	Stuart John
Jenna Ayres	Tiziana Frau
Kacey Forbes	
Karen Macdonald	
Kerry Webb	

<https://aussiehands.org/donors-sponsors/>

## **Individual Capacity Building (ICB) Project**

Aussie Hands was successful in obtaining a \$100,500.00 National Disability Insurance Scheme grant to develop an online Resource Toolkit and Peer Support Network. The work was undertaken during the period of 1 January 2021 – 30 June 2022.

The purpose was to create innovative resources for our members to empower, enable and help build skills and self-confidence for individuals with hand and upper limb differences and their families.

The resources were developed in partnership with Aussie Hands members, health professionals and education experts. The topics chosen were those nominated by people with a hand difference and their families. They also reflect research undertaken with Aussie Hands members through the Australian Hand Difference Register and frequently asked questions within the Aussie Hands community.

The ICB grant was approved pre Covid-19 and included a budget of \$11,000 for travel and catering costs. Due to Covid-19 restrictions workshops and information sessions were held online. The Steering Committee requested and received approval from the Commonwealth to repurpose the travel and catering budget into webserver upgrades and maintenance as well as administration fees for accounting. The webserver upgrade has allowed Aussie Hands to modernise and strengthen its web performance and the ongoing maintenance will help ensure that the user experience remains positive.

The project was overseen by a Steering Committee, chaired by Brooke Young and coordinated by the ICB Project Team - Jacqueline Banki (Project Manager), Cassie Muller (Project Officer) and Vinnie Chen (Digital Communications Officer).

A big thank you to Brooke Young and our project team for making this such a success for Aussie Hands current and future members.

## **Events July 2021 – June 2022**

TAS - Spring Event, Bounce, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021

ALL - Aussie Hands 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021

TAS – End of year celebration, Bounce, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021

QLD – End of year celebration, Wynnum Foreshore, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

VIC – End of year celebration, Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021

WA – End of year celebration, Wellington Square, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2021

ALL – Bounce Ideas Off web event, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022

QLD – Kids drawing display, Queensland Gallery of Modern Arts, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022

## Marketing and Communications

Despite a much smaller team of marketing & communications volunteers this year, we continued to promote Aussie Hands through social media, member stories, our new Peer Support Network and Online Resource Toolkit, and our website.

## Social Media

Through positive, realistic, and welcoming messages, Aussie Hands has sustained a growing social media presence both in Australia and overseas. Many similar organisations such as Lucky Fin Project, (USA) and Reach Charity (UK) co-share content with Aussie Hands to build a wider global community advocating for diversity and inclusion for those with a hand/upper limb difference.



Metric	Facebook	% Increase	Instagram	% Increase
Reach	4694	2100%	62610	147.80%
Page / Profile Visits	593	14.90%	10645	44.50%
New Likes / Follows	60	42.90%	492	
Current Likes / Follows	643		2160	

## Website

- 7213 users
- 16,083 pageviews
- 33.1% returning visitors vs 66.9% new visitors
- Top Countries: Australia, USA, Asia, Europe
- 3703 desktop visitors, 3402 mobile visitors, and 85 tablet visitors
- Most visited pages: Peer Support Network 61.6%, Stories and Videos 4.6% and Resource toolkit 3.5%.

### **News articles & member stories**

- Call for Peer Mentors for Peer Support Network – August 2021
- Limb Difference Awareness Week - October 2021
- Announcement of new Board of Management and Aussie Hands President – November 2021
- Launch of Peer Support Network and Online Resource Toolkit - March 2022
- Member Stories:
  - Discovering Aussie Hands, discrimination and working with Disney – Caeleigh’s story
  - Paralympic dreams among opportunities knocking for Knox
  - Handling difficult decisions about surgery – Alicia & Charlie’s story
  - Challenges, connections, and mentoring – Natalie’s story
  - A special fit – grasp on prosthetics and link to Aussie Hands – Tom’s story
  - Job dilemmas, being in the public eye and Aussie Hands president – Stuart’s story

### **Articles appeared in the following media & publications:**

#### **Channel 7 - [Tamikka's experience](#)**

- Aussie Hands member Tamikka about her ultrasound and options given.

#### **ABC - [Young Australians Living with Limb Differences](#)**

- Knox Gibson also featured along with Ayelet Marha in a story by ABC News Disability Reporter Elizabeth Wright.

#### **Source Kids - <https://sourcekids.com.au/>**

- Paralympic dreams among opportunities knocking for Knox.
- Challenges, connections and mentoring – Natalie’s story.



### Limb Difference Awareness Week – October 2021

‘SHINE A LIGHT’ was the theme of Limb Difference Awareness Week in 2021 which was all about promoting the resilience, adaptability and innovation of everyone living with a hand or upper limb difference. Members shared their experiences and messages to the Aussie Hands community via social media.

### Our village of volunteers

The Board of Management would like to thank the following volunteers for their generous contributions between July 2021 and June 2022:

#### Patron

Jessica Smith

#### Ambassadors

Dave Serpell VIC/NT

Amanda Palmer TAS

#### Shop

Colleen Birtwistle

#### Our Partners

Free 3D Hands

Australian Hand

Difference Register

#### Interstate Coordinators

Mandy Scott NSW

Verity Whitson NSW

Anastasia Hookway

NSW/VIC

Michelle Swain QLD

Emma Halliday TAS

Annette Smeaton VIC

Kim Austen WA

#### IT / Website

Vinnie Chen

Bruno Gorton

Aida Viziru

Jen Port

#### Staff

Brooke Young

Jacqueline Banki

Cassie Muller

Vinnie Chen

#### Marketing and

#### Communications

Fiona Passmore

Jacqueline Banki

Lily Toengi-Andrews

### Goals in 2023

- Increase engagement in SA, NT, and ACT in line with the other states in Australia to run more events.
- Continue to expand and recruit membership nationally.
- Introduce a new membership database that is robust, individualised and multi model that can enhance the operational running of Aussie Hands.
- Recruit Ambassadors and Interstate Coordinators for each state/territory in Australia.
- Attract and enhance corporate sponsorship.
- Create and sustain strong relationship management with regular donors.
- Feature in more articles and have greater publicity that can be shared nationally.
- Engage in expos and community events to share information about Aussie Hands.
- Launch a new fundraising campaign around Australia during Limb Difference Awareness Week (October).
- Organise a 2023 camp in rural Victoria, as recommended and supported by an Aussie Hands mum.

### The year that was...

On behalf of everyone at The Aussie Hands Foundation, thank you all for the kindness, generosity and commitment shown this year.

These challenging times have tested Aussie Hands, but we are proud of the way we have responded, and the power and strength of our community has become more evident in these past twelve months. Thank you for being there and continuing to share our vision for Aussie Hands.

**With thanks, gratitude, and excitement for the year ahead.**

*Lana Mitchell, Secretary, 2022*