









Annual Report July 2023 to December 2024

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 and reflections

- Aussie Hands focussed on fundraising and improved day-to-day operations, enriched community engagement, and featured in media which increased membership recruitment enormously.
- The Board of Management dedicated a working group to develop a Fundraising Strategy which will coincide with raising awareness o hand differences during the annual campaign(s). Aussie Hands members contributed towards fundraising by participating in the Bridge to Brisbane Run in Queensland and Local Matters Grill 'Fundraising programme in WA.
- Operational enhancements included updating the member database with assistance from Monash University interns and refining Salesforce systems to facilitate the new self-service event management platform which has improved communication to members, particularly with Birthday Cards distribution.
- Community events such as the National Christmas parties helped bring members together along with Aussie Hands members events (national).
- Aussie Hands was featured on Channel 7's House of Wellness, boosting awareness of hand differences.
- Aussie Hands received-a commitment of \$30,000 from the Sentinel Foundation over a three-year period.
- In summary, Volunteers played a crucial role in Aussie Hands, assisting with various projects throughout the year. The focus remains on supporting members, raising awareness, and ensuring Aussie Hands continues to provide valuable resources and connections to our members.



Board of Management

The Aussie Hands Board of Management is comprised of individuals with a broad range of skills and experience in community, health, legal, financial, and not-for-profit sectors. In addition, many of our Board Members have a personal connection to our hand difference community.

Chairperson Mr Dave Serpell (till February 2024).

President
Ms Elizabeth Borg.

Vice President Mr Mads Kjaer (till May 2024).

Treasurer Mr Tonchi Dean.

Secretary Mrs Lana Serpell.

Ordinary Members Mrs Fiona Passmore, Board member. Ms Kate-Louise Grey, Board member. Mr Bruno Gortan, Board member. Mr Adam Mulcahy (till May 2024).

The Board of Management met on 11 October 2023, 22 November 2023, 7 February 2024, 6 March 2024, 5 June 2024, 10 July 2024, 9 September 2024, and 9 October 2024.

Membership Summary

As of December 2024, there were 1217 Aussie Hands members. (Data collected from membership database). We keep a record of our closed Facebook group members, and this is compared here.

State/Territory	2023 Members	2024 Members	Difference Increase Members	Percentage Increase Members
ACT	14	15	1	7.14
VIC	407	447	40	9.83
NSW	264	286	22	8.33
WA	125	145	20	16.0
NT	4	9	5	125.0
SA	50	59	9	18.0
TAS	36	49	13	36.11
QLD	187	202	15	8.02
Overseas	46	N/A		



Our financials

We appreciate the contributions of Tonchi Dean and Ryk Eksteen, who have been part of our team since 2023. Tonchi has continued as a volunteer Financial Officer and Treasurer, while Ryk Eksteen has conducted the independent audit. Their support and commitment are greatly valued.

We extend a special thanks to the Sentinel Foundation for its continued generosity and dedication to The Aussie Hands Foundation Inc. We also sincerely appreciate the ongoing support of our donors and sponsors, whose contributions enable us to continue our work.

The financial figures presented cover an 18 month period from July 2023 to December 2024.

Total Income	Total Expenses	Surplus/Deficit
\$19,520	\$5,996	\$13,525
Total Assets	Total Liabilities	Net Assets
\$75,940	-\$14	\$75,926

Total equity \$75,926.

The audited report by Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen is available on request.



Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR)

Since its inception in mid 2017, the Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR) has registered over 2,600 participants by the end of 2024, continuing to make significant strides in understanding and supporting children born with upper limb differences across Australia.



The AHDR aims to:

- 1. Determine the number of children born with a hand/arm difference in Australia.
- 2. Investigate possible causes and risk factors.
- 3. Provide essential data to help plan and allocate services.
- 4. Identify participants for future research opportunities.
- 5. Explore the physical, social, and emotional impacts of hand differences in children.
- 6. Develop evidence based approaches to better manage and support children with hand differences.

This year, the AHDR expanded its network to include John Hunter Children's Hospital in Newcastle, further enhancing its reach and ability to support families nationwide. The AHDR team works closely with clinical teams from Australia's major paediatric hospitals and participating private clinics, ensuring comprehensive and collaborative support.

Exciting research initiatives are planned for 2025, including:

- The Appearance Study will explore how children aged 5 years and older feel about the appearance of their hands and its impact on emotional wellbeing.
- The APPLe Study will interview adolescents aged 14 to 17 about their priorities regarding the
 appearance and function of their hands, as well as understanding parental experiences and
 support needs following diagnosis.

The AHDR remains grateful for the ongoing support of The Aussie Hands Foundation Inc., the McNally Family Foundation, and the Australasian Foundation for Plastic Surgery, whose contributions have made this work possible.

For more information and updates, visit www.mcri.edu.au/ahdr.



Volunteers

At the heart of Aussie Hands is a village of volunteers. Aussie Hands is filled with talented and passionate people who share our vision, live our values, and embrace innovation for those with hand differences. A big thank you to each one of our volunteers.

- President and Founder: Elizabeth Borg
- HR Management | Legal Consultant: Karen Macdonald
- Treasurer and Finance Officer: Tonchi Dean
- Social Media: Kate Louise Grey
- Graphic Design Consultant: Karina McCosker
- Secretary: Lana Serpell
- IT Consultant: Bruno Gortan
- Marketing Consultant: Fiona Passmore
- Marketing Support: Lily Toengi-Andrews
- IT Consultant: Gina Barri-Rewell
- Website Consultant: Vinnie Chen
- Salesforce Administrator: Kanchana Karvannan
- Salesforce Consultant: Dyan Sethupathi
- Database Consultant: Jen Port
- Membership Database Administrator: Rita Rahman
- Auditor: Ryk Erksteen
- WA Interstate Coordinator: Kim Austen
- ACT Interstate Coordinator: Michelle Landers
- VIC Interstate Coordinator: Annette Smeaton
- Ambassador VIC: Dave Serpell
- Operations Lead: Elizabeth Borg
- Birthday Cards Coordinator: Andrea Murray
- Online Shop Coordinator: Colleen Birtwistle
- Fundraising Marketing: Leah Ahrens
- Database Consultant: Jen Port
- Interns: Anastasia Malamas, Chak Kuen Yau and Aditya Parcha



Events July 2023 to December 2024

End of year event in Ballarat 4 November 2023 (VIC)

End of year event at Wynnum Whale Park 5 November 2023 (QLD)

Summer event in Canberra 3 December 2023 (ACT)

Summer event Doncaster 21 January 2024 (VIC)

Kings Park event hosted by the Austen Family 10 February 2024 (WA)

Blaxland Riverside Park event 18 February 2024 (NSW)

Neighbour Day Easter Egg Hunt 24 March 2024 (QLD)

Mordialloc event 21 April 2024 (VIC)

Kyneton Christmas event 8 December 2024 (VIC)













Marketing and Communications

In 2024, Aussie Hands expanded its outreach through social media, member stories, peer support, and website updates. These initiatives increased awareness and engagement while promoting global advocacy for individuals with hand and upper limb differences.

Social Media

- Weekly member highlights, mentor stories, and impact features.
- Awareness campaigns for Limb Difference Awareness Month and disability advocacy events. This included the lighting up of bridges and landmarks in Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Rockhampton in the Limb Loss & Limb Difference Awareness Month colour orange.
- 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	Instagram
Views	7,800	11,900
Reach	4,700 (+245%)	9,200 (+68%)
Page/Profile Visits	3,000 (+660%)	2,700 (+132%)

Media

In September 2024, Aussie Hands featured on Channel 7's House of Wellness (Episode 28), sharing the lived experiences of The Serpell Family. This segment boosted public awareness of hand differences.

Fundraising

Aussie Hands strengthened its fundraising and partnerships in 2024, including:

- Participation in Grill'd Local Matters Fundraising.
- Success in the Bridge to Brisbane Run (QLD).

Member Stories

Sharing personal stories continued to foster connection within the community. Key stories published include:

- Teaching and Talking About Hand Differences at School Felicity's Story (April 2, 2024).
- How Media Shapes Attitudes Towards Disabilities Liz's Story (January 23, 2024).
- Felix Finally Approved for a Myoelectric Arm Talking to Dario Who Built It (August 13, 2023).



Goals for 2025

- Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Aussie Hands on Saturday 18 October 2025.
- Launch an annual Aussie Hands Day or Month, with a dedicated fundraising campaign to raise awareness in schools and communities.
- Design and distribute a new promotional brochure and Welcome Kit for new members.
- Create a promotional video to assist with raising awareness and seeking sponsorship.
- Restock children's books authored by Jessica Smith and Andrea Murray.
- Continued work on Aussie Hands operational and membership database
- Expand the self-service events platform to support localised events, leveraging the updated database to connect smaller communities.
- Develop an online merchandise store to enhance accessibility and user experience for supporters and members.
- Strengthen relationships with partners and expand participation in the Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR).
- Develop donor recognition programmes and encourage bequests.

The year that was...

Thank you to everyone at The Aussie Hands Foundation for your commitment this year. We have strengthened our community and continued supporting individuals with hand differences and their families.

This year saw progress, including new partnerships and operational improvements, setting the stage for continued impact in 2025.

Lana Serpell, Secretary, 2024