



# 2016/17

## ANNUAL REPORT

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

---

I am delighted to present the Big Sister Foundation's 2017 Report.

It is a privilege to write this board report and highlight the incredible outcomes of the local community organisations that the Big Sister Foundation supports.

Our overarching goal is to ensure women and girls in the Sutherland Shire lead strong, happy, healthy and safe lives. Our local community partners embrace this goal, advancing our belief that positive community impact can be achieved by helping to build strong women, who support strong families, and in turn build stronger communities.

Looking at our current community partners we see passionate and entrepreneurial leaders – with an extensive track record of finding innovative ways to expand resources, embrace sustainability and deliver effective services to an ever growing list of clients, mostly all without any government funding.

We value this leadership and acknowledge the highly skilled and compassionate people working in their organisations – both staff and volunteers alike. We thank you all for your dedication in the support of women and families most in need in our community.

I would also like to thank our own dedicated staff, Sonia Baxant and Gail Jones, their knowledge and fantastic work makes a considerable contribution to the Foundation. Also to our volunteer Directors, who work so enthusiastically and cohesively in advancing our key decisions.

Looking forward to all the challenges that 2018 brings

Yours sincerely



**KIM BROWN**

Chairperson

Big Sister Foundation

# STRATEGY REVISION 2017–2010

---

In early 2017 we drafted our next rolling 3 year strategy plan. Linking our long term mission with our current goals, we mapped our future focus and started the journey.

Spending much of the year researching we have developed a theory of change and a strong belief that *“positive community impact can be achieved by helping to build strong women, who can support strong families, and in turn help build stronger communities”*.

Our research highlighted issues that matter most to women and girls in the Sutherland Shire, identifying the areas most in need of funding and support.

Five key areas of impact emerged as essential in creating strong, happy, healthy and safe women and girls – *economic empowerment, strong families, education, physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing*.

With our theory of change and the key areas of impact defined we have now embarked on our new plan, refining our funding practices in line with new challenges and responding to specific community needs as they arise.

Our focus will be on older women who are homeless, or at risk of being homeless. In 2018 we will investigate how Big Sister in some small way can contribute to this growing problem, in addition to the other causes we continue to support through our partners

- Mothers with new babies and/or early-years children with no support
- Women and families experiencing mental health challenges
- Youth who are unemployed with family challenges
- Women and families in financial crisis and/or experiencing domestic violence

# 2017 FUNDING PROGRAMS

---

Since 2005 the Big Sister Foundation has donated over \$3.5 million to local community organisations supporting women and families in need.

We are committed to working with like-minded organisations who provide valuable support and deliver maximum impact from our funds invested.

Throughout 2017 the existing Community Grants program was reviewed and a decision made to pursue longer-term funding approaches via the Sustainability Partner Program.

We will continue to support local community organisations via our Monthly Donation and Community Sponsorships Program.

## SUSTAINABILITY PARTNER PROGRAM

---

In December 2015, the Big Sister Foundation announced a three-year Sustainability Program totalling \$475,000 of investment in the following three organisations

**Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation** – to establish a self-supporting Illawarra division and expand geographically providing accessible camps for kids in this high needs area.

**Dandelion Support Network** to continue to grow their donations to disadvantaged families by adding additional skilled staff, improving logistics systems and preparing for the move to new premises

**Southern Community Welfare** to expand case management hours to match the ever growing need of families experiencing crisis, or domestic violence, and older women experiencing homelessness

In late 2017, **Labour Y**, a new social enterprise by **Project Youth**, was added into our partnership program. The commitment of \$100k over 2018/2019 is made in conjunction with funding from the Ian Potter Foundation to underpin the establishment of the Labour Y company.

Throughout 2017 we also continued our long term support of **3Bridges Early Years Support Service** providing office space and \$25,000 program funding as they expand into the St George area and seek first time government support.

Now at the end of its second year, the Sustainability Program, with its flexible funding model, has enabled partners to grow by building internal resources, IT and governance systems; seek new government funding from 'proof of concept' for early intervention programs; and underpin the development of financially sustainable social enterprises.

In addition to this program, a short-term grant was made to **Sutherland Shire Family Services** of \$25,000. This gap funding enabled the continuation of the **Love Bites** education program in Shire high schools until new government funding could be obtained.

## MONTHLY DONATION PROGRAM

---

In response to many requests for funding of short-term program activities, our Monthly Donation Program provided \$6,000 in donations to various community programs.

This donation program of \$1,000 per month will continue in 2018 and is open to all community organisations in the St George and Sutherland Shire actively supporting women and their families.



# 2017 FUNDING PROGRAMS

---

## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIPS

---

Achieving shared community goals means ensuring all stakeholders are up to date with current activities and resources.

This year we have sponsored two key communication services – **SGS Interagency Newsletter by 3Bridges**, and the **St George & Sutherland Low Cost Accommodation List by St George Youth**. Both online newsletters are compiled on a weekly/fortnightly basis and distributed widely among community organisations.

We thank both of these organisations for sharing timely and valuable information and for 'keeping everyone in the loop'. We will continue these sponsorships into 2018.

## COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

---

Big Sister Foundation seeks to contribute to the understanding of what creates positive social impact in the Sutherland Shire through our knowledge, relationships and networks.

This year Big Sister has further expanded relationships with community stakeholders to gain better insight into the areas of real need and to facilitate knowledge sharing and networking between organisations.

Our highlights include:

- Attendance of AGM's for Project Youth, Dandelion Support Network, Southern Community Welfare, CESPHN and 3Bridges
- Six monthly review/update meetings with all partners.
- Community research and interviews with Serena Yam from the SGSS Housing Interagency; Karlyn Johns SCW Case Management; CESPHN – to access primary health research and local health data; David Ackroyd & Rebecca Wood, Sutherland Council, Head of Community Development – council strategic plan and new direction for council grants.

We thank these contacts for their time and contribution to our board's community understanding

Our Directors also attended a variety of fundraising events including two Kookaburra Kids dinners, Early Years Support/Rotary lunch, Sylvanvale 70th Birthday and annual fundraising dinner, Dandelion afternoon teas and many more. A special thank you to the Directors for investing personal time beyond our board meetings, your support is greatly valued.

# INVESTMENTS

---

Our investment strategy is reviewed annually in May. Our aim is to ensure the longevity and growth of the Foundation's corpus fund by taking a conservative investment approach combined with minimal overheads and costs.

The equities market will continue to play an important role in our ability to maintain funding levels. We have established with our fund managers further investment guidelines to optimise our position should large share market fluctuations occur.

Noted in last year's report was anticipated lower investment income from our cash portfolio, and as predicted, lower cash interest rates have impacted our overall level of income.

We will continue to fine tune our investment portfolio in line with current market challenges and our long term goals. We acknowledge and sincerely thank Greg Burt, CGS Super, for his ongoing prudent advice and investment education for our directors.

In 2018 we look to further understanding the opportunities available for social impact investment as the board seeks to deliver both greater social impact and financial return from our corpus fund.

# BOARD GOVERNANCE

---

The board remained unchanged in 2017 with current directors as Kim Brown (Chair), Julie McCarthy (Deputy Chair), Alison Brown, Debbie Crowley, Cathy-Anne Kelly and Shanne Taylor

Board members continue to advance their knowledge and expertise by attending investment and educational events. Highlights included UNSW CSI Impact Investing Course, NCOS Investing for Impact Seminar, Australian Women's Donor Network - Funding for the future of women and girls, 3Bridges 3 Points Conferences on ageing, youth and mental health

We continue our membership with Philanthropy Australia and look forward to participating in our new SHCN Community Membership

The board continues with our goal of minimising Foundation overheads and expenses.

Additional areas of expenditure this year included a new website reflecting the new strategic direction, a new air conditioning system for upstairs tenant offices, set-up of BSF email domain and server for BSF staff and directors, and a conference room rug for sound proofing.

The lease downstairs with Day Spa tenant has been re-signed for three years and we continue to make available our conference room premises free of charge to our community Partners for training, meetings and events.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

---

The board continues to focus on governance and risk as a core component of all discussions and decisions.

Fully compliant with ACNC policy, our audited accounts are lodged annually and core financial, risk and management processes continually reviewed.

Advice has been received from our auditor, Stuart Brown Chartered Accountants, that a recent increase in cybercrime attacks targeting the not for profit sector has left many organisations severely exposed.

Big Sister will engage consultants to conduct a Cybercrime Audit by year end 2017. Further changes to our risk policies, IT system and operations will be made as required.

Advice has been received from our key fund manager, Michael Barker, Aspirations Wealth, they have covered their cybercrime risk via usage of the North trading platform and a singular bank account. This will be further investigated in the audit.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

---

As we move into 2018 our three year strategic plan maps out our future focus. We will continue to shine a light on issues that matter most to women and girls in the Sutherland Shire, identifying areas most in need of funding or support. This will include:

- Focussing on finding solutions jointly with partners to the problem of older women experiencing, or at risk of experiencing homelessness in the Sutherland Shire and surrounding areas.
- Optimising our support and outcomes for current Sustainability Partners – Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation, Dandelion Support Network, Southern Community Welfare, 3Bridges Early Years Support Service and Project Youth's Labour Y.
- Identifying and investing in well-considered social enterprises supporting women and girls in the Sutherland Shire and surrounding areas.
- Contributing to the understanding of what creates positive social impact through further developing our knowledge and networks.
- Optimising our social impact by identifying social impact investment opportunities.

