



November 20, 2013

Big Sister Foundation
2013 Report
85th Annual General Meeting

Message from the Chair

I am delighted to present our 2013 annual report.

This year has extra significance as it marks the Big Sister Movement's 85th birthday and brings the honour of being involved in an organisation that has a long and rich history of helping women in need.

Since 2005 the Big Sister Foundation has donated over \$2.5 million to the community, supporting over 27 community organisations and funding the building Sylvanvale's integrated child care centre, Milkarie House.

Over these past eight years our focus has often been on the enormous needs in the disability sector. However, with the announcement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the changes in funding this brings we have revisited our approach.

By looking at our organisation's original purpose and researching the needs in the community we have reaffirmed our core mission of supporting women in need. Specifically, helping women with mental health challenges was identified as a key objective in 2013 where we could deliver most benefit.

This renewed focus has enabled Big Sister to provide a clearer point of understanding for local community organisations and a clearer focus for grant making programs.

With that in mind 2013 has been a year where we have both tested the waters with a new community grant program and continued our support of Kookaburra Kids Foundation and Sutherland Early Support Service.

Our relationship with both these organisations spans many years and we acknowledge the invaluable contribution they provide to women and families in the community.

Donations

In May 2013 Big Sister launched a Community Grants Program aimed at providing gap funding to community organisations that are supporting women with mental health challenges, or those at risk of mental health challenges .

Applications totalling \$450,000 were received from 14 different charities for amounts ranging from \$100,000 to \$5,000.

After careful evaluation the Board selected a suite of programs incorporating both frontline support programs and longer term education and early intervention strategies.

In August 2013 we announced \$138,000 of grants would be awarded to six non-profit community organisations that included Amelie House, Kookaburra Kids Foundation, Bears of Hope, Southern Community Welfare, Sutherland Early Support Service and Sutherland Shire Family Services.

In addition to the grant program we have also established a Monthly Donations Fund, whereby \$250 per month is allocated to fund smaller, ad-hoc requests that fit our core purpose.

Our first small donation of \$750 was made to fund the Healthy Minds Expo in Cronulla enabling the organisers, Gynea Community Aid, to provide stalls for the 35 exhibitors.

Linkages with Community Groups

The year has seen us deepen our relationships with local community organisations in order to better understand the true needs within the Shire and to grow our profile.

Prior to launching the grants program we conducted a round of consultation via guest speakers and one on one discussions. Input from these groups highlighted the where funding gaps existed and enabled Big Sister to better understand their operations.

Input was received from Carl Piraino - Engadine Community Centre; Amanda Jones - Centrelink; Gillian Minto - Medicare Local; Kellie Checkley - Project Youth , Joanne Love - Hub Community Centre Caringbah, Maree Everitt - Sutherland Council Communities Manager.

Investment Growth

Financially 2013 was a successful year for the Big Sister Foundation. A healthy growth in the market value of our share portfolio and an increase in cash revenue from our investments meant we have enjoyed our most successful year since the global financial crisis in 2008.

This growth, coupled with our minimal overheads and business expenses will enable us to further extend our support and increase our donations in 2014

At the annual investment review held in May, key decisions were made to maintain our overall investment strategy in light of fluctuating global markets, but to increase the asset allocation of shares in the St George portfolio, thereby moving this portfolio from a defensive to a more moderate asset allocation.

Revitalising The Board

After the 2012 AGM the board appointed new directors Julie McCarthy, Shanne Taylor and Cathy-Anne Kelly. These directors have been a valuable addition, participating proactively and contributing to all key decisions.

It was with great sadness that Jan Pearse resigned from the board at the end of June to travel around Australia. Jan has been a Big Sister for 11 years and made a significant contribution to the Foundation throughout this time, including serving as President from 2010 – 2012. We thank her fully for all her years of service.

It has been a busy year for the board.

The board attended a webinar by the Institute of Company Directors, Non Profit Directors Responsibilities and the need for ongoing board education has been highlighted for 2014.

Debbie Crowley and Kim Brown attended the Community Partnerships seminar run by the Sutherland Council.

Several directors attended the Kookaburra Kids Foundation teenage camp in Wollongong, sitting in on the Empowering Women's education session. In addition we have attended several Kookaburra fundraisers.

Amelie House was visited by directors to inspect the newly built women and children's domestic violence refuge and there we met with the centre manager and case workers.

Contact with our founder's granddaughter, Joanne Gates has been initiated and additional historic information has been sought

In addition to education and community activities, the board has focussed on updating bank signatories to ensure all bank accounts have up to date clearances and a revision of all our risk policies. Special thanks to Alison Brown for leading this project.

Resulting from this review new risk policies have been drafted and a small investment in our premises was made. Upgrade of our 30 year old boardroom chairs, the addition of external lighting and signage to our office have been completed. In addition, the poor condition of our driveway is currently under review and is expected to be fixed prior to Christmas subject to board approval.

Looking ahead

As we enter 2014 we look forward to evaluating the outcomes of our 2013 grant programs and building ongoing partnerships with these organisations.

With a strategic review planned for February our aims are to continue to maintain and grow our corpus fund, enhance our community linkages and seek worthwhile women's programs to support and fund.

A word of thanks

Finally I would like to thank Sonia Baxant and Gail Jones for their continued hard work and support of the foundation. I would specifically like to acknowledge the professionalism and expertise which Sonia provides to our board and we welcome her input and advice on our projects.

I would also like to thank the Board for all your time and dedication; it has been an enjoyable and productive year and a privilege to work with everyone as a Big Sister.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Brown', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kim Brown
Chairperson
Big Sister Foundation

Community Grants Program



“On behalf of the Directors at Big Sister Foundation, we wish to thank our grant recipients for their tireless work and commitment in our community. We look forward to continuing to work together and growing our support to assist you in enriching the lives of the people and communities you serve.”

Grants Awarded for 2012/2013

Amelie House Women and Children's Refuge

\$25,000 for a social educator to support women and children who are escaping domestic violence and homelessness.

Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation

\$24,000 for the Young Women's Leadership Program to support and empower young women aged between 13 -18 years caring for a parent with a mental illness.

Bears of Hope Pregnancy and Infant Loss Inc

\$5,000 to form a support group and therapy sessions for parents who have lost an infant in Sutherland and St George areas

Southern Community Welfare

Funding of \$35,000 for ongoing case management services to support clients with complex social and mental health needs

Sutherland Early Support Service

\$25,000 for their Sister to Sister Project, assisting mothers of newborn babies who are at high risk of post natal depression

Sutherland Shire Family Services

\$24,000 for the Love Bites Respectful Relationships Program for high-school student education programs promoting awareness and understanding of domestic violence and sexual assault and offering strategies to avoid unhealthy relationships.