



The Big Sister Foundation

2014 Report

Presented at the 86th Annual General Meeting
November 19, 2014



Message from the Chair

I am delighted to present our 2014 annual board report.

Since 2005 the Big Sister Foundation has donated over \$2.7 million to the community by funding local community organisations that support women and families in need.

We entered 2014 with overall goals of growing our investment funds; enhancing our local community relationships; and continuing to assist women with mental health challenges by seeking worthwhile community programs to fund and support.

At the end of this term we have advanced all of these goals and reaffirmed our core mission of supporting women in need in the Shire.

Community Grants and Donations

In September we launched our second annual Community Grants Program to provide gap funding to non-profit community organisations that support women who are experiencing, or at risk of, mental health challenges .

Applications totalling \$261,000 were received from 14 different organisations, with requests ranging from \$3,200 through to \$40,000.

After careful evaluation the Board selected a broad range of programs - encompassing frontline and crisis support programs, through to longer term education and early intervention strategies.

On November 28th, 2014 we will announce \$140,000 of grants to be awarded to seven community organisations including Dandelion Support Network, Dunlea Centre for Girls, Kookaburra Kids Foundation, Project Youth, Southern Community Welfare, Sutherland Early Support Service and Sutherland Shire Family Services.

We acknowledge the valuable contribution all these organisations provide to our local community and women in need. We highlight our ongoing relationship with the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation and the Sutherland Early Support Service and welcome two new grant recipients Project Youth and Dandelion Support Network.

The Monthly Donation Fund also provided \$3000 in response to requests from Dunlea Girls Home, St George and Sutherland Shire Interagency Newsletter and The Hub Community Centre Caringbah.

Investment Growth

2014 was a successful year for the Big Sister Foundation with an overall 7.4% growth achieved in the market value of our investment portfolio.

Despite continued low interest returns on our cash funds and a conservative approach to equity investments our corpus fund continues to grow at a healthy rate. This, coupled with minimal overheads and business expenses, will see Big Sister continue and increase the allocation for community funding in 2015.

Risk Management

The board continues to review overall risk policies and conducts regular audits in addition to our core financial risk management disciplines. As part of this review two areas were highlighted.

Maintenance to our Gynea premises was identified and completed. This included the upgrade of rough driveway surfaces, fire and asbestos audits, and major roof and gutter repairs to resolve water leakage problems.

One outstanding concern is the potential for reputational risk to both Big Sister Foundation and the IBIS Care Big Sister Hostel. Since 2004 IBIS' contractual name change requirements have not been honoured, resulting in continued confusion of both organisations in the local community.

Board Changes and Activities

It has been another busy year for the board and all directors have worked enthusiastically and cohesively to ensure key decisions are advanced.

The 2013-2014 board of directors were Alison Brown, Kim Brown, Debbie Crowley, Cathy-Anne Kelly, Rita Kirkland, Simmone Lindstrom, Julie McCarthy, and Shanne Taylor. I would like to acknowledge the specific expertise each director brings to our board and thank them all for donating their valuable time.

It is with great sadness we say goodbye to Rita Kirkland who retired from our board in November. Rita has been a Big Sister since 1999 and made a significant contribution to the Foundation, assisting in the transition from managing an aged care facility through to investing financial assets for community benefit. We thank her fully for her years of service and we will all miss her very much.

In addition we say farewell to Simmone Lindstrom who resigned in August due to family relocation. We thank her wholeheartedly for her 4 years of service as a Big Sister director.

We also congratulate Debbie Crowley on being awarded Sutherland Shire Citizen of the Year 2014 and we celebrate her community achievements over 20 years. As a past Big Sister Chairperson, emergency foster carer and an advocate for refugees and the disadvantaged in the Shire, Debbie is a role model and mentor to the Big Sister Board.

Some other highlights for the board this year have included

- Attendance at an NDIS Update delivered by Bruce Bonyhady AM, Chair of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and meeting with larger corporate foundations via our membership with Philanthropy Australia
- Visiting the Dunlea Girls Centre at Engadine to meet the girls, see their accommodation facilities and review Dunlea's programs for troubled teenagers.
- Meetings with the co-ordinators and governing committee of the Sutherland Early Support Network to review their services and future capacity building requirements.
- Presentations by Judy Lewis, ex CEO of the St George Foundation; Annabelle Bartlett, CEO of Sydney Women's Shelter; Louise Burton, NSW manager of Philanthropy Australia and Heidi Ericsson, Clinical Director Headspace, Hurstville and Miranda.
- Fundraising events including Kookaburra Kids Foundation and Sylvanvale annual fundraising dinner were attended.

The board completed training activities that included Alison Brown and Kim Brown attending Sutherland Council's NFP Governance Seminar and Kim Brown attending a Grants Writing seminar hosted by Our Community.

Further board governance education is identified for 2015.

Linkages with Community

The year has seen us continue to broaden and deepen our relationships with community organisations. Input from these contacts continues to highlight where funding shortfalls and community challenges exist.

We have sought to raise the public profile of Big Sister Foundation to increase awareness of our foundation and the community organisations we support.

Activities have included the launch of a new website and Facebook page; sponsorship of the St George and Sutherland Shire Interagency Newsletter; meetings and presentations with other community organisations including Zonta club, 3Bridges, Sydney Women's Shelter, Philanthropy Australia and Strategic Grants.

In order to better preserve our past stories we have recently enlisted the assistance of a volunteer intern to search for and collate past historical assets.

We look forward to documenting these in 2015

Looking ahead

As we go into 2015 we enter the last year of our three year plan for supporting women's mental health through our annual grant programs.

We look forward to announcing the final round of grants in 2015 and to evaluating the ongoing community benefits that these programs and their organisations deliver.

With a key long term goal of identifying and delivering more lasting and significant projects we will seek to extend our relationships with some of these organisations.

Strategic shifts that will underpin many of our future directions are also underway.

We watch closely the significant changes in Government funding models – particularly in disability and aged care – that will usher in a new era for all not for profit organisations. Challenges presented by this shift will require new business models, new ways of thinking and new client / provider relationships.

New models of philanthropy will also be needed. We will seek to find innovative ways to assist local organisations to build the capacity needed to adapt to this new world.

We also see community foundations across Australia continuing to grow and develop as local and effective forms of philanthropy. We look to these organisations for inspiration and validation of Big Sister's community approach to giving.

Our aim is to be a catalyst in developing innovative community networks and placed-based giving programs in order to better support women in need in the Sutherland Shire and beyond

A word of thanks

Lastly on behalf of all Board Members, I thank Sonia Baxant and Gail Jones for their continued hard work and dedication to the Foundation. Sonia's extensive knowledge and experience serves our board well and we welcome her input on all our projects.

As we head off into 2015, we reflect on being part of an organisation that has such a long and rich history of helping women in need. It continues to be an honour to be involved and to optimise the legacy left by all past Big Sisters.

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

Grants Awarded for 2014/2015



"The directors of the Big Sister Foundation wish to thank our grant recipients for their tireless work and commitment in our local community. We look forward to working together and continuing our support to assist you enrich the lives of the people you serve."

Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation \$24,000

Funding provided for the Young Kookaburra Graduate Project providing young women caring for a parent with a mental illness access to leadership training, mentoring on self-esteem, tertiary education and career choices.

Dandelion Support Network \$24,950

Distributing pre-loved nursery equipment free of charge to families in need across the Sydney region. Run 100% by volunteers and donations, Big Sister funding is to further develop organisational capacity .

Dunlea Girls Centre \$6,000

Funding for the SEED program, assisting teenage girls attending Dunlea's residential centre to develop healthy relationships, self-esteem and critical thought processes around media usage and online safety.

Project Youth \$40,000

Funding provided to continue the 'Inspire Project', a successful youth mentoring program supporting young teenage women in contact with the juvenile justice system.

Southern Community Welfare \$3,250

The Breakfast Project will enable SCW's case manager to streamline the referrals process and connect marginalised people immediately with social services

Sutherland Shire Family Services \$15,000

Links to Safety provides access to timely and critical safety measures for women escaping domestic violence.

Sutherland Shire Early Support Service \$25,000

Contagious Calm Project providing training for volunteers who are supporting new mothers at home with high anxiety and post natal depression.

Grants Awarded for 2012/2013

Amelie House Women and Children's Refuge

A social educator to support women and children who are escaping domestic violence and homelessness.

Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation

Young Women's Leadership Program supporting and empowering young women aged between 13 -18 years caring for a parent with a mental illness.

Bears of Hope Pregnancy and Infant Loss Inc

Set up a support group and therapy sessions for parents who have lost an infant in Sutherland and St George areas

Southern Community Welfare

Funding for ongoing case management services to support clients with complex social and mental health needs

Sutherland Early Support Service

Sister to Sister Project, assisting mothers of newborn babies who are at high risk of post natal depression

Sutherland Shire Family Services

Love Bites Respectful Relationships Program for high-schools promoting awareness of domestic violence and strategies to avoid unhealthy relationships.

ABOUT BIG SISTER FOUNDATION

Making a difference to women's lives in the Sutherland Shire

With a proud history of supporting women since 1928, the Big Sister Foundation continues its mission of giving a helping hand to women in need.

Reaching out to women who are living in the Sutherland Shire, our aim is to empower them and in turn give their families a brighter future.

Our support is broad. Historically, we have provided funding to help women and their families

- who are disadvantaged;
- those with disability and mental health challenges;
- those with families in crisis or in domestic violence situations;
- those in the ever-challenging role of single parent or carer;
- with empowerment through education
- and those in need of extra help through a difficult time.

We seek to enable community organisations to make the most of their skills, resources, and most importantly commitment so they can continue to provide essential services and create lasting change for women in need in our community.

