



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021





# OUR VISION

**At Brainwave, we believe informed, resilient and connected families enable the best outcomes for children.**

**Our purpose is to reduce the impact of paediatric neurological conditions on children and their families, by supporting families and children with brain injuries and illnesses to adapt and thrive by:**

**Providing holistic support to families at the point of diagnosis including information, referrals and other resources**

**Providing ongoing whole-of-family support as the needs of parents, siblings and children change over time**

**Connecting families to one another and facilitate opportunities to build authentic, meaningful and ongoing relationships**

Brainwave Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the original custodians of the land, and respects the rights that they hold as the Traditional Custodians. We also recognise the dispossession of the land and its ongoing effects on First Nations Peoples today.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & CHAIR



Relying predominantly on face-to-face fundraising and family events, the COVID pandemic has had a dramatic effect on Brainwave Australia's support of families and income this year and the resultant unfortunate need to reduce the hours and positions in our team.

During these uncertain times, all organisations must go back to their belief and purpose to reposition and achieve the best impact they can. Brainwave is no exception and we used the opportunity to replan with our Strategic Plan 2021-2024, which affirmed Brainwave's core belief that:

**Informed, resilient and connected families reduce the impact of paediatric neurological conditions on children and their families.**

Despite the challenges of the COVID restrictions, we continued to expand our hospital-based initiatives, enabling us to reach more families, through the growth of our Catch-A-Break program and Bear Essentials Packs to all the major paediatric hospitals across Australia.

As a result, we were able to connect with more families who suddenly found themselves in a hospital to provide immediate support, including emergency accommodation.

Thanks to the terrific support from donors, trusts and foundations, we were also able to continue our commitment to providing support for the transition from hospital to home during the year by funding mobility equipment, aids, and therapies that assist recovery and rehabilitation.

Connecting parents to peer support is core to Brainwave's role and we have been delighted to see the increased engagement and sharing through the Brainwave Parents Connect facebook page.

Throughout this challenging year, the support from our corporate partners – our Principal Partner, Mercedes Benz, along with Ferrero, Smartways, Blueprint, OMD, Pinchapoo and Madame Flavour has been outstanding through ongoing financial and expert contributions that have enabled Brainwave to continue its work.

With Amy Timoshanko's departure in July 2021 to Girl Guides Victoria, we welcomed the highly experienced not-for-profit leader, Paul Bird, who has already made a big impression.

We also welcomed Melissa Webster, Executive Director Clinical Services of Irabina Autism Services, and Kenny Stewart, Group Managing Director of OMD, to the Board.

Lastly, our heartfelt thanks go to the team, volunteers and families for their tremendous resilience, commitment and hard work over the year.

Paul Bird  
**CEO**

Karen Passey  
**Chair**



# OUR WORK

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**With ten children being diagnosed with brain injuries and illnesses a day in Australia, over 3,000 families a year are plunged into crisis and a very different future.**

The needs of the child mean that families typically enter financial hardship by losing an income earner, struggle to navigate service systems, lack trusted information and advice, face social isolation, exhaustion, and guilt over the neglect of siblings.

**"You feel guilty – like you are favouring one over another – but you can't do it all."**

A third of families split up under the pressure of caring for a child with complex medical needs. The ways that children and families with brain injury and illness adapt and respond are incredible. But many families still lack access to the information, resources and connections they need.

We believe that this support – information, resources and connections – is essential in helping families to thrive and adapt.

“

**...we stopped going to the park for 2 years, It was just too hard with the younger ones. But that means our eldest son missed out on something as normal as playing at the park.**



Founder Josephine Nicholls (centre) with her two sons, Edward (left) and Nicholas (right)

Founded by Josephine Nicholls (pictured left), a mother with a son diagnosed with a brain tumour, in 1994, Brainwave Australia has since supported thousands of families across the country to reduce the impact of paediatric neurological conditions on children and their families and enable them to adapt and thrive.



# SUPPORTING FAMILIES



**We provide** holistic support to families at the point of diagnosis including information, referrals and other resources.



**We provide** ongoing whole-of-family support as the needs of parents, siblings and children change over time.



**We connect** families to one another and facilitate opportunities to build authentic, meaningful and ongoing relationships.



## EQUIPMENT & THERAPIES PROGRAM

This valuable program assists Brainwave children with their recovery by providing specialist equipment and access to allied health therapies.

In 2020/21 we provided funding for a variety of equipment and therapy applications. We are proud to have supplied a range of essential equipment to our Brainwave children, including:

- A mobile feeding device
- A lateral stability suit
- Specialised tricycles
- Bath seats/bench
- Head support collars
- Walking frames
- A car harness system
- A standing frame
- An air pressure mattress



## CATCH-A-BREAK PROGRAM

Families often experience significant financial strain when faced with unexpected, ongoing costs associated with a child's long term hospital stay.

Brainwave works in consultation with hospital social workers to ensure that disadvantaged families have access to urgent financial support.

In 2020/21 Brainwave provided assistance with emergency accommodation for families traveling outside of metropolitan areas. Meal and beverage vouchers were also distributed to those in need, enabling families to 'Catch-A-Break'.



## BRAINWAVE CHRISTMAS PARTIES

Our Christmas parties are a time for our communities in Victoria and New South Wales to connect, celebrate and make wonderful memories.

Held at Luna Park, Brainwave's Christmas Parties are a special day out for families. Children can participate in a range of festive activities including: a Santa meet and greet, face painting, letter writing, photo opportunities and of course, amusement park rides. Brainwave's Christmas parties bring families together to share in the magic of Christmas



## FAMILY DAYS

For many of our Brainwave families, having a child with a serious brain illness can have a big impact on the family unit.

Common everyday activities like a family trip to the supermarket, park or play centre can be out of reach, with one parent often staying at home to care for the unwell child.

This can lead to disruption of family relationships and social isolation for parents and siblings. Our social days allow families to engage in experiences together.

In addition, there are opportunities for families to meet with others in similar situations and build key support networks.



## CAMP BRAINWAVE

Camp Brainwave is a 2.5 day residential camp for families who have a child with a neurological condition.

These camps were developed as part of Brainwave's Care Program. At Camp Brainwave families enjoy an all-inclusive weekend away filled with fun, games and activities for all ages and abilities.

Families are able to connect with one another in a safe, respectful and supportive environment.



## KIDS & SIBS

Kids and Sibs is a popular Brainwave school holiday program held in Melbourne.

This unique event provides an opportunity for inclusive play between Brainwave children and their siblings.

Held at Kids in Motion in Port Melbourne, Kids and Sibs is an actionpacked session where children of all abilities can bounce, climb and swing in a safe and supported space, encouraging children to develop new friendships and draw inspiration from one another.

Kids and Sibs is a hugely successful program, and a favourite for many of our Brainwave families.



# THANKS TO YOU

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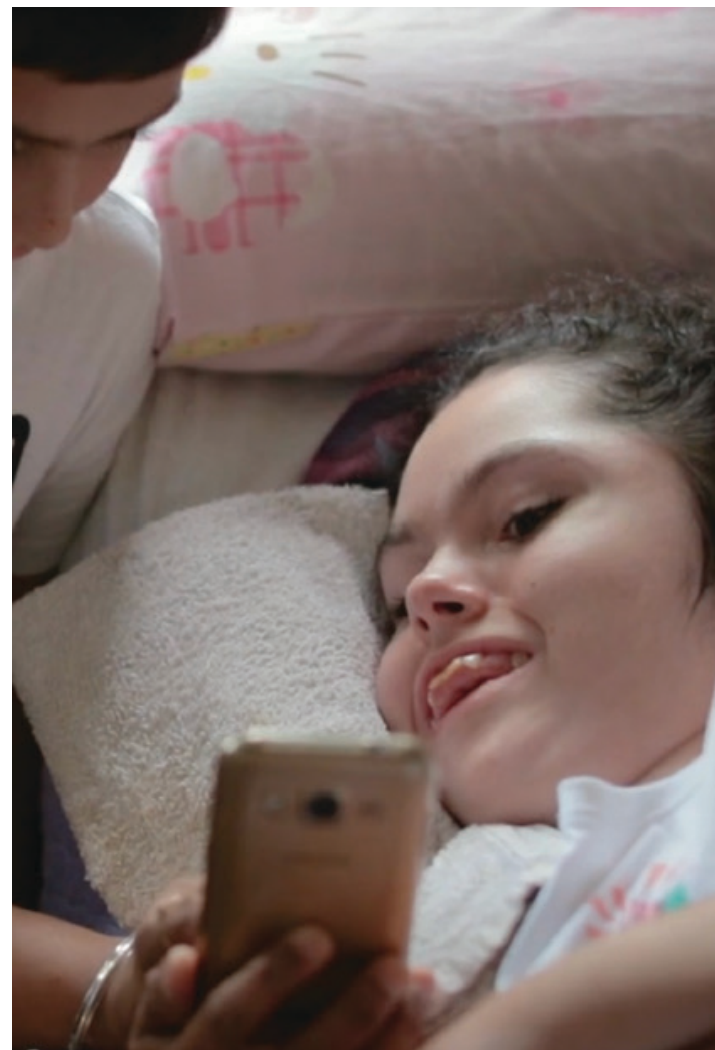
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## BRAINWAVE HAS ASSISTED HOSPITALS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY:

### Victoria:

The Royal Children's Hospital  
Monash Children's Hospital

### New South Wales:

The Children's Hospital at Westmead  
Sydney Children's Hospital

### Queensland:

Queensland Children's Hospital

### South Australia:

Women's & Children's Hospital

### Western Australia:

Perth Children's Hospital

### Tasmania:

The Royal Hobart Hospital



# 156

**BEAR ESSENTIALS PACKS  
WERE GIVEN TO  
BRAINWAVE CHILDREN**



## AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY BRAINWAVE



**TOTAL OF  
997  
FAMILIES SUPPORTED  
BY BRAINWAVE IN  
AUSTRALIA THIS YEAR**

Brain injury and illness change people's lives and futures. We are here for the whole family from the point of diagnosis onwards. No matter where families are in Australia, we help support them by providing holistic support in times of crisis, ongoing access to information and resources, and build meaningful social connections with and between families.



**DURING 2021 DUE TO COVID-19 A LOT OF OUR USUAL FAMILY PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WERE PUT ON HOLD UNFORTUNATELY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**





## MEET EMILY

**Emily is our first child. At week 19 of the pregnancy, the ultrasound detected that Emily had suffered a right sided haemorrhage. She was born via C-section at 37 weeks weighing 2.3kg. An MRI at 8 weeks showed a right sided basal ganglia embolic stroke.**

Emily is a 5-year-old girl with a diagnosis of spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy (affecting all 4 limbs) with a gross motor classification scale level III and FMS 4,2,1.

Emily is significantly affected by her spasticity with a high level of spasticity of the left upper and lower limbs, moderate to right lower limb and mild to right upper limb. She also has microcephaly. She has also developed seizures caused by the damage to her brain.

Emily has significant tone and spasticity in her limbs, left more than right. She has moderate to significant tightness in her hamstrings and gastroc muscles which requires careful monitoring and management. She has AFOs and leg wraps to assist with this as well as the use of a standing frame. Emily is under the care of the VPRS team at RCH and requires a set of botox every year. Emily also has significant tightness in her left upper limb which is being managed by her occupational therapist.

She has been receiving different types of therapy since she was 8 months young. This includes physiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Speech therapy and music therapy. She requires ongoing, regular physiotherapy input to maximise her outcomes, monitor for tightness and secondary issues and progress her skills.

In late 2018, Emily had accessed funding through the Better Start program however due to the delayed roll out of the NDIS, these funds were exhausted and Emily had not had funding to access the therapy she required. Brainwave had played major role in helping to support Emily's therapy while we were waiting for NDIS to roll in. Brainwave's generosity had enabled Emily to continue receiving Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy and improving her balance movement.

We are now fully funded by NDIS.

Her progress in the last 12 months including independent steps, using her left hand (weak hand) to stabilise objects, ability to say up to 15 words, ability to pick up object from the floor, ability to play throw and catch balls.

She uses walker at school but walks by her self around the house.

Emily is a determined, always smiling at people, and she is fearless with a impulsive nature. She will try her best and have a go at everything in school.

We are proud of her and believe she will achieve more in the future.

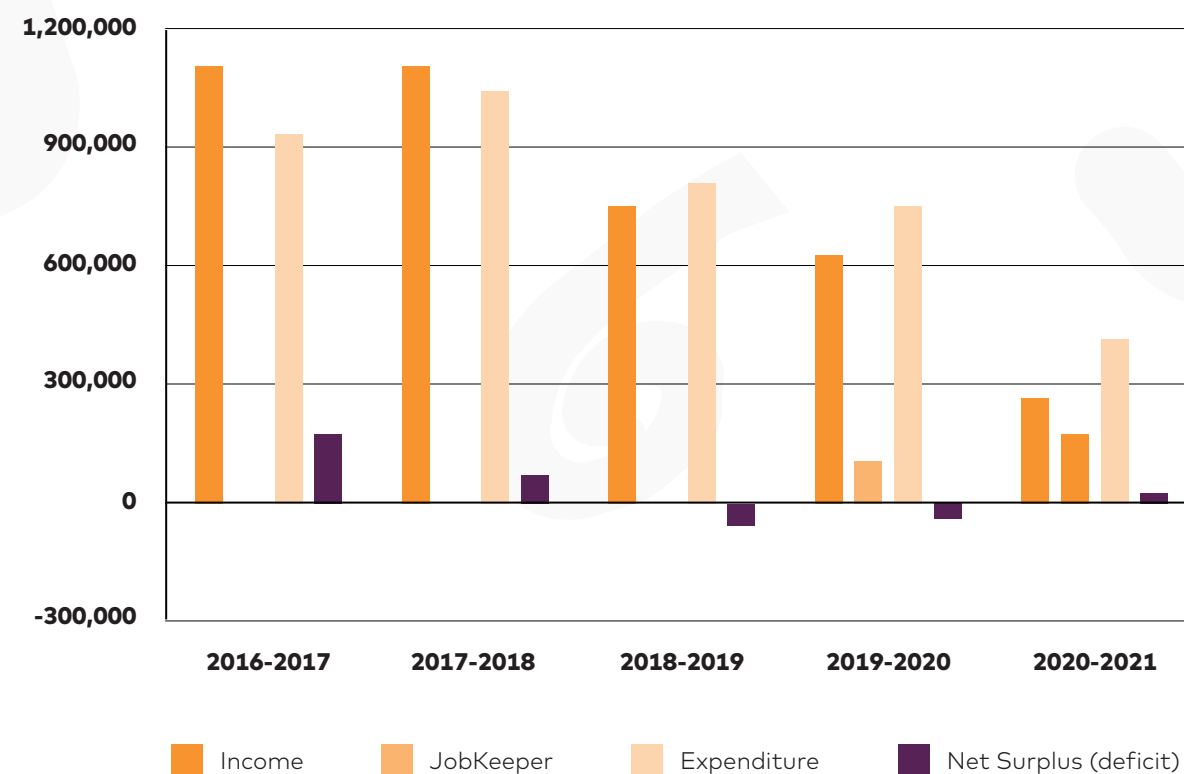
**Every day in Australia, as many as ten children are diagnosed with a neurological condition such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, stroke, or brain tumour.**



# FINANCIALS

It takes plenty of heart, passion and determination to tackle neurological conditions in children. This battle for must be fought on solid financial foundations. That's why we are committed to maintaining a sound financial position, this year and into the future.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE



Brainwave Australia, like all charities, has experienced another challenging year due to the continuing restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has significantly impacted the organisations' ability to hold fundraising events as well as provide family support events to our Brainwave families.

Commonwealth Government assistance (mainly Job Keeper), together with generous support from our

supporters, enabled Brainwave to continue to deliver direct funding to families, however at a much lower than pre-COVID-19 levels.

Each year, Brainwave prepares a full set of accounts which are independently audited by BDO, located at Level 18, 727 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria and lodged with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Our statutory accounts are available on request.



**\$252,784**  
INCOME



**\$166,622**  
JOB KEEPER



**\$406,317**  
EXPENDITURE



**\$13,088**  
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)



# WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

In 2020/21 our corporate Partners and Sponsors generously assisted Brainwave through the funding of programs, donations and direct purchase of equipment. The shared commitment of our partners has been integral to Brainwave's work. These organisations have made a big impact on the lives of many children and their families.

## PRINCIPAL PARTNER

### Mercedes-Benz Cars Australia



Mercedes-Benz Cars Australia has supported Brainwave's efforts for over eight years by providing a generous partnership grant, and their staff, retailers and customers have supported our Brainwave families through:

- Fundraising at dealer golf days
- Providing volunteers for events
- Donating proceeds of the sale of Mercedes-Benz merchandise at their National office
- Attending fundraising galas and other events
- Donating auction items for galas
- Events at Mercedes me

## CORPORATE PARTNERS

**Westpac**

**FERRERO**

**SMARTWAYS**  
LOGISTICS FOR LIFE

**mill & Co**

**OMD**

**blue  
print**

**Madame  
Flavour**

A big thank you to Smartways for storing the items for our Bear Essentials Packs, as well as sending them out to hospitals at no cost.

Through collaborations with our sector partners, donors, corporate partners and individual supporters we are looking forward to introducing our new social enterprise - Brainwave Bikes.

## TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS

- Westpac Foundation
- Yoga Aid Fund
- Willam Angliss Trust Fund
- Barr Foundation
- Lord Mayors Charitable Fund
- Angior Family Foundation
- Boncal Family Foundation
- The Erridge Family
- Fairways Golf Foundation

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Kids in Motion
- Lord Somers Camp
- PowerHouse
- Ready Set
- Variety
- Mirabel
- Little Dreamers
- Big Brother Big Sister
- First Step
- Pinchapoo
- Melbourne Ladies Committee
- The Royal Children's Hospital
- Monash Children's Hospital
- The Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Sydney Children's Hospital
- Queensland Children's Hospital
- Women's and Children's Hospital SA
- Perth Children's Hospital
- The Royal Hobart Hospital





## **BRAINWAVE**

Supporting families & children with  
brain injuries & illness to adapt & thrive



Principal Partner

1300 766 819

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[brainwave.org.au](https://www.facebook.com/brainwave.org.au)

