

Aussie Hands Annual Report

2019-2020



The Aussie Hands
Foundation Inc

OUR PURPOSE

Aussie Hands was established in 2000 by Elizabeth Borg after her son Dave Serpell was born with a hand difference. For 20 years, Aussie Hands has been providing support, understanding and encouragement to individuals with a hand difference and their families.

Aussie Hands is a volunteer run not-for-profit organisation.

Board of Management

Ms Colleen Birtwistle	Ordinary Board Member (Merchandising Lead)
Ms Ann Brickhill	Ordinary Board Member
Ms Larah Cornthwaite	Ordinary Board Member
Ms Josephine D'Ambrosio	Ordinary Board Member
Ms Alicia Fenwick	Ordinary Board Member (Marketing & Communications Lead)
Ms Karen Macdonald	Vice-President
Ms Lynne Matheson	Ordinary Board Member (Grant & Fundraising Lead)
Mr Areeb Ovais	Treasurer
Mr Craig Parsons	Secretary
Ms Lisa Ross	Ordinary Board Member
Ms Elizabeth Borg	Ordinary Board Member
Ms Brooke Young	Chairperson & President (HR & Event Lead)

The Board of Management met on 17 July, 28 August, 20 November 2019 and 5 February, 1 April and 3 June 2020.

'Our mission is to support people with a hand difference, provide networking and information and co-fund the Australian Hand Difference Register.' Brooke Young, Chairperson



AUSSIE HANDS VIC AMBASSADOR
DAVE SERPELL WITH DAVID CLARK
CALVARY HEALTH CARE TASMANIA

Membership

As at 30 June 2020 there were 734 Aussie Hands members. Membership categories include individuals, health professionals, supporters and volunteers. Members are located in each Australian state and territory as well as internationally. NSW 148, QLD 101, SA 35, TAS 26, VIC 324, WA 76 International 8. Membership grew by 131 with the biggest growth in Queensland.

A membership report is available by contacting info@aussiehands.org

Grants and Fundraising

The biggest challenge for Aussie Hands during the 2019-2020 was the impact of COVID-19 on our activities and securing on-going funding. We lost our major donor mid-2019 and the funding has not been replaced. This means that we reduced our paid staff to 1 day per week (National Coordinator) and other duties were undertaken by volunteers and Board members. A major grant worth \$100,500 from the Australian Department of Social Services was awarded and due to start at the end of 2020.



Aussie Hands gratefully acknowledges generous ongoing support from the Sentinel Foundation (\$10,000 donation), Print Obsession and Pixel Salad Studio.

Members fundraising generated \$5,927.53

We registered with Shopnate, a free service to charities. Every time a supporter shops through Shopnate they collect a free donation for Aussie Hands.

Financial Report

Special thanks to Edwin Taitz, EzyAccounts for his service as Finance Officer, and to Treasurer Areeb Ovais. An independent audit will be conducted by Mathew Simon (registered CPA No. 9527342) for the 2019-2020 financial year by December 2020, as government authorities extended audit deadlines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2019-2020 Financial Year Summary

Total income	Total Expenses	Surplus/Deficit
\$24,789.38	\$ 39,881.09	(\$3310.30)
Total other income \$11,784.76		
Current Assets	Non-current assets	Total Assets
\$ 63,955.22	\$ 0	\$ 63,955.22

Australian Hand Difference Register (AHDR)

Since commencing in mid-2017, the AHDR now has over 1000 children who were born with a hand/arm difference participating. The Register aims to:

- Find out how many children are born with a hand/arm difference in Australia
- Learn more about possible causes and risk factors
- Gain information to help plan services
- Identify possible participants for future research

A congenital upper limb difference is a hand or arm difference that is present at birth. An upper limb difference is present in approximately 0.2% or 1 in 600 of babies born. Sometimes it is detected by ultrasound before birth, but more often it is not found until the birth of the baby.

Head of Hand and Microvascular surgery at Royal Children's Hospital, Associate Professor David McCombe said: 'In most cases, the cause is not known but with ongoing research we are learning more about the development of the limbs and what happens in congenital differences.'

'The AHDR is a vital tool that will help us better inform children with a congenital difference and their families. Through the AHDR we are developing a national collaborative research network that we are confident will give us answers to questions about causes and outcomes. As clinicians we would encourage as many families to participate and support the AHDR as much as possible,' added Associate Professor McCombe.

The Register is managed by researchers at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, located at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, and includes children from NSW, QLD, SA & WA – with more recruitment sites planned in 2020. The Register has been funded to date by support from the [Aussie Hands Foundation Inc.](#), the Australasian Foundation for Plastic Surgery, and the McNally Foundation.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Our scheduled activities were disrupted due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions causing many events to be cancelled.

National

Limb Difference Awareness Week, 18-24 October 2019

New South Wales

- Spring Event, Concord, 15 September 2019
- End of Year Event, Camden, 8 December 2019

Queensland

- Spring Event, Brisbane, 15 September 2019
- End of Year Event, Brisbane, 24 November 2019
- Fleays Wildlife Park, 22 February 2020
- GOMA Children's Art Gallery, 14 June 2020

South Australia

- Parents Workshop, North Adelaide, 3-4 August 2019

Tasmania

- Winter Event, Ross, 28 July 2019
- Parent Workshop, Hobart, 22 February 2020

Victoria

- Spring Event, Port Melbourne, 15 September 2019
- End of Year Event, Port Melbourne, 24 November 2019
- Learning to Drive Workshop, Elwood, 1 February 2020
- National Volunteer Week, recognising volunteers 18-24 May 2020
- Online Winter Event, 21 June 2020

Western Australia

- End of Year Event, 7 December 2018

Acknowledgement to Aussie Hands Interstate Coordinators who coordinated various activities, for which their efforts have benefitted members enormously.

NSW Mandy Scott/Verity Whitson, NSW/VIC Anastasia Hookway, QLD Emma Glencross, TAS Emma Halliday/Rachael Potter, VIC Annette Smeaton/Lisa Ross.

PATRON & AMBASSADORS

Kate Doughty served as the inaugural Patron for 12 years and stepped down in January 2020. An amazing role model, Kate helped members take pride in who they are. She was a strong advocate for establishing the Australian Hand Difference Register, co-founded with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Jessica Smith, OAM was appointed as the Aussie Hands Patron in February 2020. Jessica is an advocate for positive body image and diversity.



We were delighted to appoint Ambassadors in New South Wales, Tasmania, and Victoria.

Tom Covell, NSW Ambassador shared videos, social media messages and encouragement to members with a hand difference.

Dave Serpell, VIC Ambassador attended Aussie Hands events, provided support and mentoring and helped to promote Aussie Hands through social media.

Amanda Williams, TAS Ambassador presented at Aussie Hands events and in meetings with health professionals in Tasmania.

Limb Difference Awareness Week – October 2019

The first Australian wide Limb Difference Awareness week was held in October last year. Each Aussie Hands family with a child under 12 years of age was sent a book 'Little Miss Jessica.' The book is about a young girl with a hand difference and families were encouraged to share the book and their own stories with their schools and community. This was a great success and positive feedback was received from members on the initiative.

Social and Traditional Media (Analytics)

Social media platforms used to communicate with members, promote awareness about hand/limb differences and share information include LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

- ❖ LinkedIn: 68 followers
- ❖ Instagram: 839 followers
- ❖ Facebook: 889 members
- ❖ Website: aussiehands.org

News articles appeared during Limb Difference Awareness Week in October 2019.

Articles appeared in the following publications:

Ross House 2019 Annual Report, December 2019

Source Kids (sourcekids.com.au)

- Rare Disease: Limb Difference, 12 December 2019
- International Pole Champion Showing Kids with Limb Difference Anything is Possible 18 December 2019
- Bonnie Gillespie, 21 February 2020
- Aussie Hands Appoints New Patron, 29 May 2020
- Finding Joy Together As a Family During COVID-19, 26 June 2020
- Callie Cuts Through The Anxiety of Starting Kinder, 30 July 2020

Tasmanian Health Service, General Practice Liaison Newsletter, Issue 100, June 2019

Mikko gets helping hand from 3D Printed Robohand, 18 October, Herald Sun



Volunteers

Thank you to the many volunteers who give of their time and expertise. Aussie Hands is a volunteer led organisation, each person provides invaluable assistance to the achievement of our objectives. Special recognition goes to Ms Jacqueline Banki who spent countless hours leading the Marketing & Communications effort, Vinnie Chen who was responsible for web maintenance, Rita Rahman for her work with the CiviCRM database and Ms Cassie Muller for her work as the Events and Volunteer Coordinator.

Board of Management and Project Leadership

With the changes to funding situation and reduction in staff, the Board of Management restructured roles and responsibilities. In addition to the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary roles, Board members volunteered to lead operational activities in the following areas: Marketing & Communication (Board Lead: Alicia Fenwick); HR and Volunteers (Board Lead: Brooke Young); Grants and Fundraising (Board Lead: Lynne Matheson). Each operational area was supported by volunteers. Volunteers were recruited from Aussie Hands membership, Genetic Support Network of Victoria, Monash University and the Boroondara Volunteer Network. Belinda von Bibra was appointed as National Coordinator and has worked 1 day per week since October 2019. Her main focus is member communication, member database administration and supporting the Board.



Aussie Hands

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019-2020

- APPOINTMENT OF JESSICA SMITH, OAM AS PATRON
- INAUGURAL LIMB DIFFERENCE AWARENESS WEEK HELD 18-24 OCTOBER 2019
- NATIONWIDE ROLL-OUT OF THE AUSTRALIAN HAND DIFFERENCE REGISTER
- VICTORIAN 'LEARNING TO DRIVE WORKSHOP' HELD IN FEBRUARY 2020
- TASMANIA 'PARENTING WORKSHOP' HELD IN FEBRUARY 2020
- INCREASED MEMBERSHIP & INCREASED ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK AND STORIES PUBLISHED
- ONLINE EVENTS HELD DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

