

Believe.

Barnardos Australia Annual Newsletter



Together, we're changing lives

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our supporters. Thanks to your incredible generosity over the past year, we have had the resources to provide essential care and support to the children and families who rely on our services. Over the past 12 months, your kindness has helped thousands of children find safety, care, and opportunity.

Throughout 2025, our Barnardos Children's Family Centres have seen more families than ever struggling with the rising cost of living — going without essentials like food, medication, and safe accommodation. But because of you, families only need to tell their story once to receive the tailored programs and services they need to cope with immediate crises and build lasting stability.

Your unwavering compassion is changing lives every single day. Together, we are creating a brighter, safer future for children and families in need. Thank you for standing with us and being such an important part of our mission.



Your impact at a glance:

- 140 corporate and philanthropic partners supported the delivery of essential services across NSW and ACT
- More than 12,000 people donated to support children and young people
- We welcomed 1,017 new donors, 2,608 Barnardos Buddies and 48 corporate and philanthropic partners to Barnardos this year

These generous contributions allow us to:

- Respond quickly to emergencies and urgent needs for children and families
- Deliver essential services such as intensive family support, parenting programs, youth and family services, domestic and family violence support
- Plan for the long term and implement high impact initiatives
- Provide safety and escape planning, and early intervention for children and families

90% of young people in our programs reported an improvement in health and wellbeing, and 80% of parents/caregivers in our parenting programs said their capacity to care had improved.*

*Impact determined from all children, young people and families in our programs and from outreach activities in our communities.

Message from our CEO

As I leave Barnardos after over ten years of leadership as CEO, it is a privilege to reflect on the remarkable achievements over this time, and the optimism that drives our purpose and values.

It is this spirit of resilience and hope that delivers the best outcomes for the thousands of children, young people, and families we support each and every year.

Over the past 12 months, the demand for our services has continued to grow. Across Australia, too many children are growing up without the safety and stability they need. Children are seeing their parents struggle to put food on the table and many live in constant fear, under the high-pressure volatility of domestic and family violence. Our work is not only vital, but urgent.

At Barnardos, we envision a future where every child has a safe home, nutritious meals, and the opportunity to thrive. This year, as always, we have remained fearlessly optimistic in this pursuit. With bravery and persistence, we leaned into the challenges, pushed boundaries, and delivered meaningful change in the lives of thousands of children.

Our specialist children's social care teams worked tirelessly with children, supporting families, and advocating for systemic reform.

The stories shared in this newsletter are a testament to this work. They reflect the courage of our teams, the dedication of our partners, and most importantly, the strength of the children, young people, and families we support.

As I leave Barnardos, I do so with confidence in the bright future that lies ahead for the children whose lives we are privileged to impact.

With my best wishes, Deirdre Cheers



Supporting a mother to believe again



Rachel* is a young single mother of four children, with two in primary school, one in pre-school and a ten-month-old baby.

Her former partner, with whom she shares two children, was violent and eventually incarcerated.

Despite their young ages, the children's lives had already been marked by instability. Her eldest child, Lola*, had taken on a caregiving role, often missing school to help at home and wanting only to be with Rachel. She was tired, anxious, and carrying responsibilities far beyond her years. Her teachers echoed these concerns, as she struggled making friends.

The second eldest child, Harry*, just five years old, carried visible signs of stress, was on anxiety medication, and was not yet toilet trained. The family first connected with Barnardos through a local food hub, where they collected food hampers. They then began attending breakfast programs and supported playgroups, where trust grew and support followed.

With a community around them Rachel began to find her feet and regain a sense of control. And slowly, we saw the change in her children. They received school supplies, helping them feel confident and included. Rachel came to see that she wasn't a bad mother – just someone who had faced enormous hardship and was doing everything she could.

Today, the family is in a much stronger place. Lola is thriving at school, making friends, and enjoying learning. Harry is now toilet trained, attending school regularly, and is noticeably calmer. The weight on their little shoulders has been lifted.



*Names changed and models used for illustrative purposes to protect privacy.

A life-changing friendship

Luke is a long-term donor who began his journey nearly 30 years ago as a mentor in the Kid's Friend Program in the ACT.

Launched in 1980, the program pairs children with a trusted adult to support their wellbeing, helping kids build confidence and resilience. In his 20's, Luke joined after his difficult divorce left him searching for purpose. While keen to get involved, Luke still had some reservations. With Barnardos support he was matched with nine-year-old Dan.

"At the time I was unaware of the profound impact this chance encounter would have on my life," Dan shared. The commitment was just eight hours of contact per week for a year – a few hours on the

weekend doing everyday things: shopping, housework, watching TV. After a few initial meets, their bond truly began to form. Luke said, "As that year started to draw to a close, I knew that this friendship was not going to end."

Over time, their relationship grew into something more like family. Even after moving cities, they stayed in touch. Now years later, they still see each other regularly.

"I went into the program scared but hopeful," said Luke. "I didn't know what was going to happen, but I am all the richer because of it."

Dan added, "It is only now as a father myself that I can truly understand the significance and importance a strong male role

model can have on a fragile young boy's life. I would not be the man I am today if it wasn't for his love and commitment to me all those years ago."

Luke's commitment hasn't only been personal. For more than 25 years, he has also been a generous supporter of Barnardos, contributing to help ensure programs like Kid's Friend continue to change lives. His story is a testament to the power of showing up both in person and through ongoing financial support.



Luke and Dan on a bike ride in the 1980's

A lifetime of heartfelt generosity



June Gunning

“With no children of my own, I am second mum or aunty to many.” This is how June Gunning describes her legacy of having been a foster carer with Barnardos for 20 years.

Giving is part of June’s nature. Alongside building a successful career, she and her husband committed

to becoming carers. “My husband and I were privileged to have young children and teenagers on respite and short-term care, working closely with the wonderful staff at Barnardos Canberra.”

But June’s giving was not limited to providing a stable home life to children in need of security and care. “I could provide a safe caring environment, but quickly realised that there are many vulnerable children, and so organisations such as Barnardos were going to need to be viable into the future. It was therefore easy for me to also become a donor.”

Through her involvement with the organisation over many years, she identified that Barnardos’ values were closely aligned to her own, so when she and her husband were updating their Wills a few years ago, she decided to make yet another gift - a bequest. June’s legacy will now reach beyond all those children she fostered: “I hope this gift can go towards helping Barnardos Australia continue in supporting families to be the best parents and caregivers they can be and empowering children to reach their full potential.”

A fitting testament to a life characterised by giving.

At Barnardos Australia, we believe in a future where every child feels safe and supported.

By leaving a gift in your Will, no matter how big or small, you’re helping ensure secure and stable funding for vital safety and prevention programs. The incredible legacies left, like June’s, can provide the next generation of children with stability, education and care – things every child deserves, but not every child receives.

For enquiries or donations
1800 061 000
[barnardos.org.au](https://www.barnardos.org.au)

 BarnardosAustralia

 barnardosaustralia

 @barnardos_au

 @barnardos_au



 **Barnardos
Australia**

A Company Limited by Guarantee | ABN 18 068 557 906
Head Office | 60-64 Bay Street, Ultimo NSW 2007 | GPO Box 9996, Sydney NSW 2001