



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



**THE KIDS'
CANCER
PROJECT**

SURVIVAL STARTS WITH SCIENCE.

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Bobby, T-Cell acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (T-ALL) survivor



Our People



FOUNDER

Col Reynolds OAM



CHAIRMAN

Kazuma Naito



CEO

Owen Finegan



PATRON

The Hon. Margaret Beazley

Board of Directors

- **Col Reynolds OAM**, Founder
- **Kazuma Naito**, Chairman
- **Tim Rose**, Nine Plus
- **Jessie Glew**, WOTSO
- **Tim Blair**, Run for Kids Foundation
- **Debra Singh**, Greenlit Brands (Former)
- **Cathryn Prowse**, Colin Biggers & Paisley
- **Simmone Reynolds**, Australian Army
- **Nigel Everard**, Gate Gourmet
- **Shane Sibraa**, Argyll Scott Asia (Former)

Research Advisory Committee

- **Prof David Ziegler (Chair)**
Sydney Children's Hospital
- **Dr Brenda Weigel**
University of Minnesota (USA)
- **Prof Jonathan Izant**
Yale School of Medicine, Former (USA)
- **A/Prof Andrew Moore**
Queensland Children's Hospital
- **Dr Jordana McLoone**
University of New South Wales
- **Dr Nic Waddell**
QIMR Berghoffer Medical Research Institute
- **Dr Steve DuBois**
Boston Children's Hospital (USA)
- **A/Prof Pouya Faridi**
Hudson Institute of Medical Research



OUR MISSION

To provide scientists with the funding they need to make discoveries, translate pioneering research, advance treatments and build support programs that will improve survival rates for all young people with cancer and allow them to thrive after treatment.



OUR VISION

To see 100% of children, adolescents and young adults survive cancer and live with no long-term health implications caused by their treatment.

A Message from our Founder

It's been an honour and a privilege to continue to advocate for childhood cancer research and those affected by the insidious disease throughout the last 12 months.

Since founding this charity in 1993, I have met with countless families who have been affected by childhood cancer, and their stories have certainly shaped who I am today.

Additionally, I have met with hundreds of people and researchers aiming to change the lives of those affected, and thousands of incredible people whose care for others has seen them donate generously to help see genuine change take place.

It is the passion and determination of each of these people that will ensure that one day we will achieve a 100% survival rate with no long-term effects for kids with cancer.

It has been over 32 years since this charity was founded, and over 20 years since we made it our sole focus to fund research. Together, we have committed over \$76 million to research and we have helped to increase survival rates by over 30%. Paediatric cancer labs no longer look like high school science classrooms, and are now world-class operations with data utilised to inform decisions around care and treatment.

While this is a wonderful evolution and progress which we are proud to have been a part of, we also know that there is still so much to be done.

Every week, three Australian children tragically die due to cancer, while countless others live with serious long-term health implications due to their treatment.

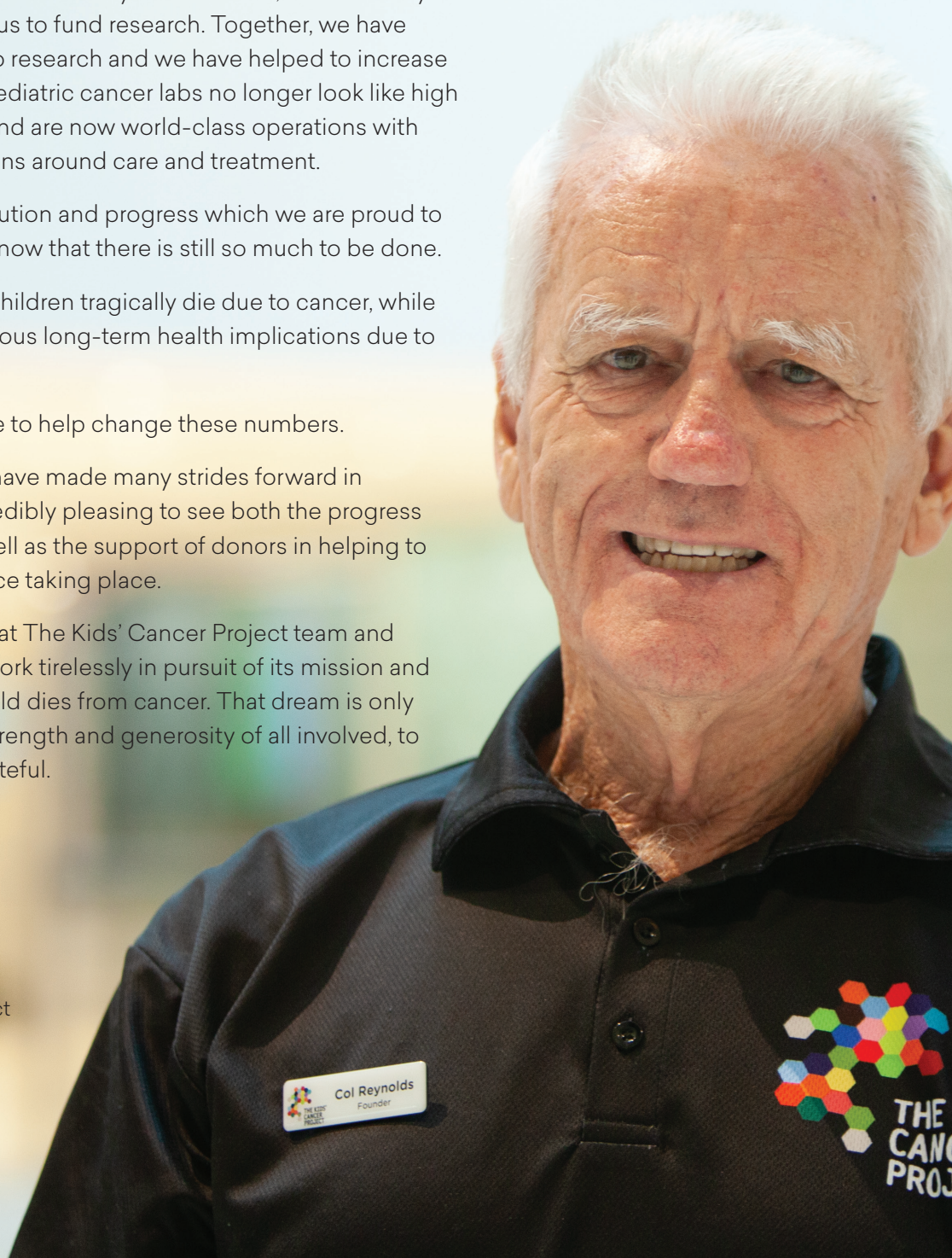
We must continue to do more to help change these numbers.

Over the past 12 months, we have made many strides forward in research and it has been incredibly pleasing to see both the progress being made on projects as well as the support of donors in helping to contribute towards this science taking place.

It is abundantly clear to me that The Kids' Cancer Project team and community will continue to work tirelessly in pursuit of its mission and vision of a world where no child dies from cancer. That dream is only made possible through the strength and generosity of all involved, to whom I am always forever grateful.



Col Reynolds OAM
Founder, The Kids' Cancer Project



A Message from our Chairman & CEO

It's an exciting time in The Kids' Cancer Project's history as we enter an era of sustainability and innovation, continuing to fund cutting-edge childhood cancer research while expanding our influence and capabilities.

FY'25 has seen another year of growth in our commitment to research, culminating in a total of \$3.916 million (including research advocacy) that has been invested in 47 research projects across 21 institutions in Australia.

In the last year we have increased our gross profit margin from fundraising activities to 81% from 76% – allowing our organisation to have a greater impact on childhood cancer research via donations. Our total research commitment has now surpassed \$76 million, while 21% of our research projects are co-funded with the government or other charities – stretching the donations we receive further than ever before, while also highlighting our cross-sector collaboration.

The Kids' Cancer Project regards itself as a leader within the childhood cancer research community, a belief underpinned by our efforts to facilitate the development and implementation of a Childhood, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Mission, partnering with other like-minded charities and institutions.

Our research strategy – guided by our Research Advisory Committee – ensures that the generous donations we receive are allocated to projects that will help kids with cancer sooner and have the strongest impact for families across the country. Our Col Reynolds Fellows have played a pivotal role in this, taking the funding received from The Kids' Cancer Project and forging ahead, creating personalised and more effective approaches for treatment of childhood cancer, while helping to resolve the limitations of current care.

Improvements internally also mirror the tremendous progress we're making externally. Our new website, launched in April, prioritises the experience of our users with greater accessibility, while our Research Hub provides a wealth of information and resources to increase awareness and understanding of childhood cancer.

Operational advancements in data management, automation and donor engagement have also improved our efficiency and effectiveness as an organisation – ensuring that we can create stronger relationships with our supporters, to whom we are continually thankful for and humbled by through their generosity.

As an organisation, we remain steadfast in our determination to advocate for the struggles of those who have been forever changed by their cancer diagnosis. Our community of fundraisers, donors, contributors, corporate partners and volunteers demonstrate this through their generosity and continued support – allowing us to deliver meaningful change, knowing that one person can truly make a difference.

We are thankful to our Board of Directors and Research Advisory Committee for their selfless dedication, time and expertise in guiding our efforts, and to our researchers and Col Reynolds Fellows for their commitment and pursuit of research excellence to help deliver a better future.

On behalf of all the staff at The Kids' Cancer Project – of whom we are constantly proud of for their work and unwavering belief – thank you for your support in helping us continue towards a world where children with cancer not only survive their diagnosis but thrive well into the future.

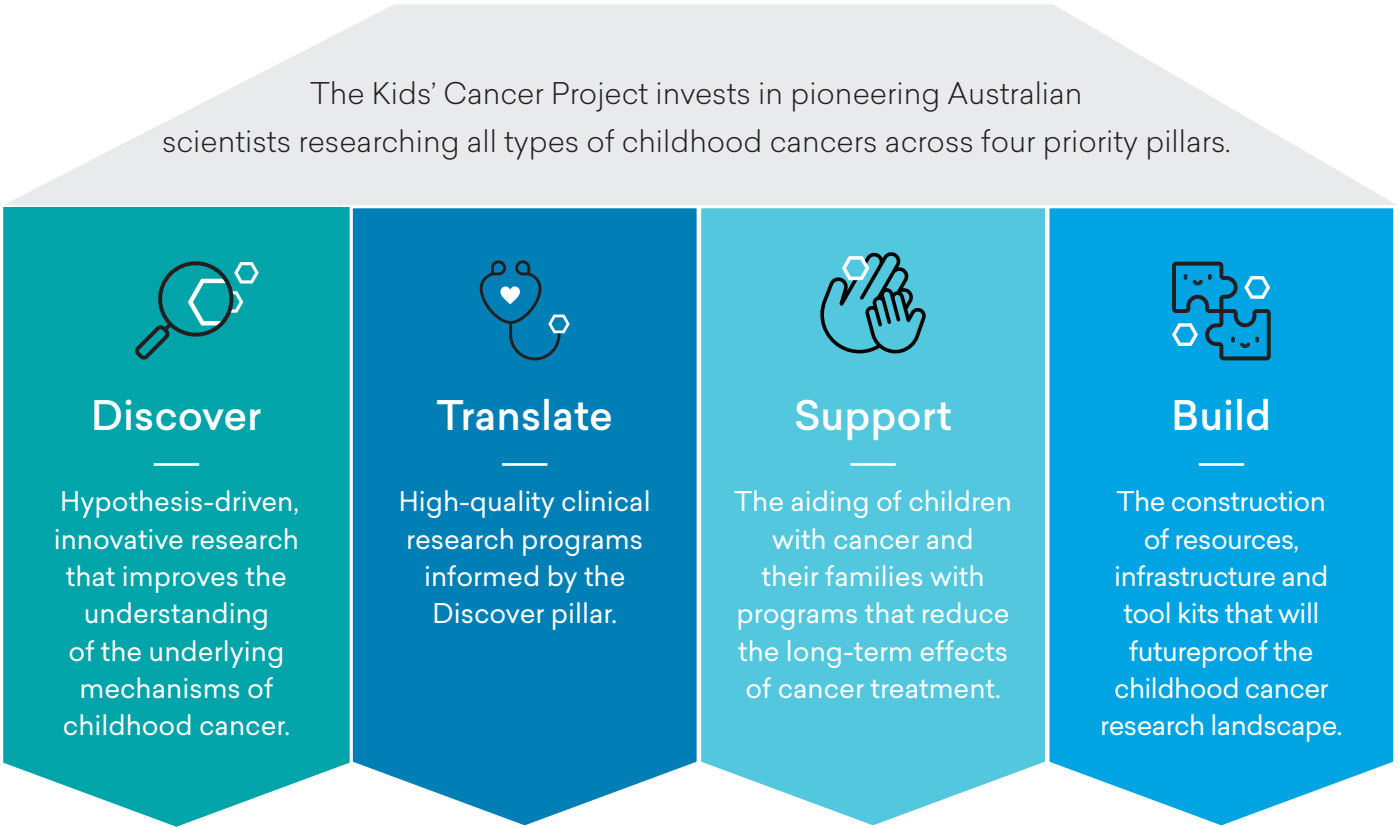


Kazuma Naito
Chairman, The Kids' Cancer Project



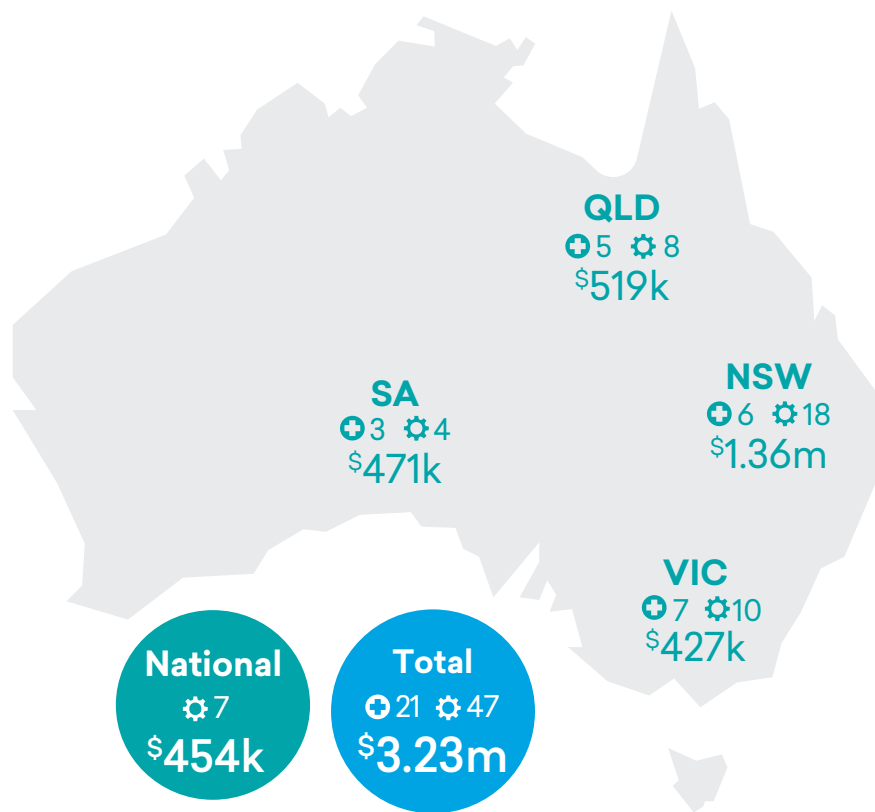
Owen Finegan
CEO, The Kids' Cancer Project

Our Research



Research Funding Impact FY'25

Discover	Translate	Support	Build
20 total projects	12 total projects	11 total projects	4 total projects
65% have advanced identification of new childhood cancer targets	50% have moved pre-clinical findings toward translation	100% have contributed to improving side-effects management	90% have advanced public awareness and engagement
40% have progressed development of effective cell-based treatments	67% have progressed work influencing clinical practice or care	82% have advanced service delivery and patient uptake	50% have increased patient and family engagement
\$1.59 million invested	\$490,000 invested	\$860,000 invested	\$290,000 invested



Research Funding Across Australia

The Kids' Cancer Project funds projects in 21 different research institutes and hospitals across four states, as well as national projects with ANZCHOG (Australian & New Zealand Children's Haematology/ Oncology Group).



Institutes



Number of Projects



24

Col Reynolds Fellows



13

Solely-Funded Research Projects



10

Co-Funded Research Projects



3.23m

Total Investment

Research Projects by Cancer Type

	Various	Haematological	Brain	Neuroblastoma	Sarcoma
PROJECTS	16	9	14	1	7
FY'25	\$1,320,000	\$528,000	\$900,000	\$205,000	\$474,000
% OF INVESTMENT	35%	16%	28%	6%	15%

Our Impact

FY'25 was characterised by an expansion and innovation of operations across multiple departments within The Kids' Cancer Project, leading to sustained growth and strong research investment.

A key factor in this has been the endeavour and focus to enhance the charity's national presence. Inaugural golf events in Canberra and Brisbane returned over \$67,000 combined, while our Sydney golf events demonstrated the strength of the existing donor community with over \$163,000 raised.

The charity's flagship function, Christmas for a Cure, built upon its success in 2023, with a 45% growth in funds raised throughout the event. Raising over \$463,000, the event was highlighted by the powerful words of 19-year-old cancer survivor Tiana Saunders, who shared a poem detailing her experiences of being diagnosed with neuroblastoma as a child.

Corporate partners Beyond Bank and Bromic also helped to raise funds in their own innovative ways, contributing \$27,000 and \$35,000 respectively.

Strong growth in the partnerships landscape was also matched by increased revenue throughout The Kids' Cancer Project's four major appeals in February (K'day), June (Tax Appeal), September (Spring Appeal) and December (Christmas Appeal), with close to \$855,000 raised across all appeals.

A 22% growth in Major Gifts underpinned a strong Tax Appeal campaign, which was supported by an innovative matched-giving campaign through our donor community. Angelia La Verde, a former leukaemia patient from Perth, proudly featured alongside her parents and siblings, with her beautiful smile also gracing the cover of this report!

With just under \$2 million contributed throughout the year, The Kids' Cancer Project's regular giving community had a profound impact, with 6,222 donors gifting an average of \$25 per month.

A re-engaged Play for Purpose Program also saw revenues triple year-on-year within the raffles program, with ticket purchasers entering prize pools to help give over \$49,000 in proceeds.

The charity's partnership with Gathered Here, a free will-writing service, saw gifts made through wills and bequests increase throughout the year, with people of all ages leaving a portion of their estate via their seamless process.

FY'25 saw a 16.4% growth in revenue across major campaigns, with over 78% of the \$1.25 million raised in this space attributed to the highly successful Write a Book in a Day competition, which saw 523 schools across Australia combined to raise a record \$980,000.

An array of community events and fundraising initiatives complemented these events, contributing over \$660,000 through major events such as the Better Challenge and the Bondi to Bronte swim. Individuals also played a powerful role with countless fundraising campaigns taking place throughout the year, raising \$170,000.

Community involvement also extended directly to families impacted by cancer through the bear program. With bears able to be purchased directly or donated to hospitals and oncology wards nationwide, a total of 9,686 bears helped to generate \$654,000. This program is also proudly supported by logistics company Smartways, who ensure a cost-free delivery for all The Kids' Cancer Project bear donations.



5%
increase

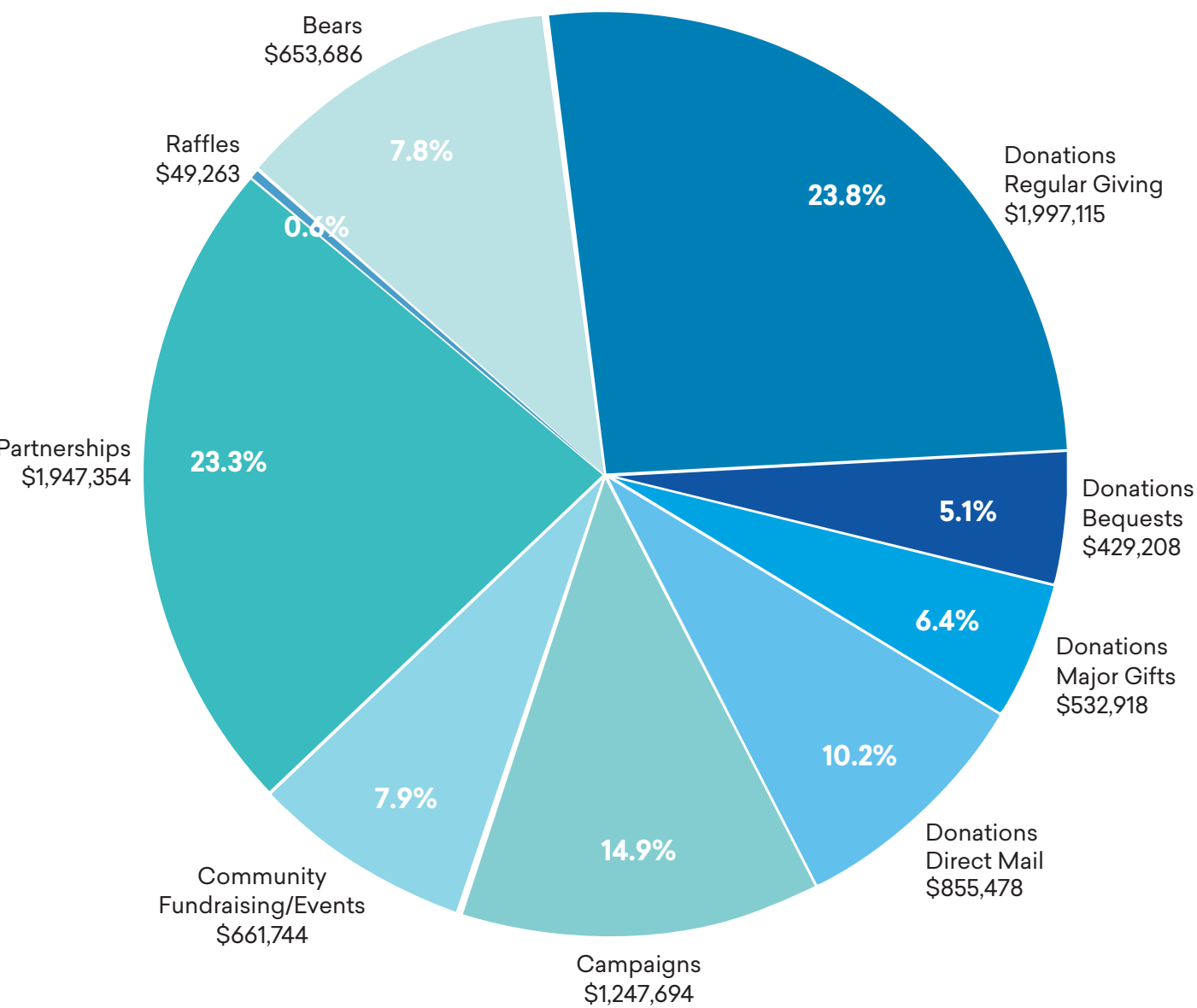
in gross profit margin to continue
to support Australia's top scientists



\$13.7
million

committed currently to
active research projects

Fundraising Income in FY'25



21.4%
growth

in childhood cancer research
over last two financial years



87%
survival

of kids diagnosed with cancer,
per Australian Institute of Health
and Welfare 2024 (AIHW)

A Community's Commitment

Throughout the year, The Kids' Cancer Project's calendar has been dotted with community events and campaigns which have both advocated for the plight of those affected by childhood cancer while also raising funds for vital research to take place.

National campaigns such as K'day, Write a Book in a Day, Better Challenge and Pirate Day are all characterised by different features, but are underpinned by our consistent need to fund bold and innovative science that makes a difference for kids with cancer.

K'day is our annual dollar matching day that coincides with International Childhood Cancer Day on 15 February. Our volunteers took to the iconic Coogee Promenade draped in red shirts and bucket hats as the word 'K'day' was written in the sky over the beach. Our donors raised \$486,000 for our researchers during the 2025 campaign with meaningful donations coming from across the country.

Write a Book in a Day – Australia's most inspiring writing challenge – continues to rewrite records and survival rates, raising \$980,000 for children with cancer in 2024. Over 14,000 writers from 1,937 teams across 523 schools and writing groups took part, with schools from Christmas Island to Tasmania involved in the competition.

The Better Challenge, featuring over 800 participants who took on 90km for the 90 kids diagnosed with cancer each month, raised a total of \$177,000 this year. Leukaemia survivor Hugo Kulscar bravely shared his story as he outlined his path back from his cancer diagnosis as a child to his recent success, winning a NSW junior rugby State Championship.

May is Brain Cancer Awareness Month, with Pirate Day our flagship event within those 31 days. Australia's deadliest childhood cancer, brain cancer has on average a 23% five-year survival rate. Thanks to our fundraisers – from content creators to female golfing groups and early learning centres to supermarkets – \$97,000 was raised in total, the equivalent of what it costs to fund the pilot studies to test three new cancer drugs. These funds will help bring researchers closer to human clinical trials for kids with brain cancer.

Providing pals to kids who need it most, our bear donors ensured over 9,300 bears were delivered to 70 participating hospitals across the country this financial year – the impact of which cannot be understated for children and their families in a time of need.

"We have found the bears provide so much comfort to children who are quite unwell, especially children who require procedures," says Kayleen Cole, a clinical nurse from Bathurst Hospital in New South Wales.





Top left: Pirate Day celebrations; Top right: Better Challenge 2024 ambassadors Hugo Kulscar and Dr David Mizrahi; Bottom left: Christ the King Primary School's Write a Book in a Day participants hard at work; Bottom right: the Joyce Family

"We really appreciate all your support by providing children with the bears, which are used in both the inpatient and outpatient wards."

In Orange and other parts of New South Wales, local netballers coloured the courts as part of Crazy Hair & Sock Day in July. Underpinned by our partnership with the NSW Swifts, the associations helped us raise \$55,000 in July.

Our community champions displayed the same level of team spirit as those netballers, each contributing in their own way to funding our research projects.

The festive season saw the Joyce family's Christmas lights fundraiser return to Shepparton in Victoria for its second year. The entire town answered the call, with other families in the street hosting activations and helping the Joyce's however they could, while local businesses donated prizes for raffles and auctions to raise a phenomenal \$15,000. The family were even recognised with a letter from their local MP for

the efforts, demonstrating the power of community involvement and engagement.

It's been ten years since the inaugural High Tea for a High Cause – hosted in Sydney by the Weir family in memory of their daughter Evie, who devastatingly passed away due to cancer. The latest edition saw over 100 guests enjoy a wonderful day of fundraising through market stalls, auctions and raffles, with over \$22,000 raised on the day to take the decade-long support total beyond \$170,000.

The Kids' Cancer Project is proud to be supported by so many incredible donors and fundraisers from coast to coast, just like the Light Brekky Quartet, who raised over \$4,000 with their 19km Rottnest Channel swim to raise money for vital childhood cancer research.

We continue to be humbled and inspired by the efforts of all within our community in helping us fund a better future – one where no child dies from cancer.

2026 and Beyond: Research

The Kids' Cancer Project's Research Strategy for FY'26 forms part of the overarching 2024-29 masterplan, which prioritises increased return on investment, co-funded projects and enhanced advocacy.

Guided by the principles of stakeholder needs, timeliness, financial sustainability and a national approach, The Kids' Cancer Project will continue to be agile and bold in its investment in childhood cancer projects across the continuum.

With new technologies and standards of care emerging worldwide, The Kids' Cancer Project is determined to remain at the forefront of pioneering research that will make a difference sooner.

Personalised treatment plans that utilise the likes of precision medicine, artificial intelligence and complex datasets will soon become commonplace, with the charity aiming to ensure that standards of care can be enhanced by the projects it invests in.

The Kids' Cancer Project plans to oversee and deliver programs that enhance understanding of childhood cancer and develop novel treatment strategies, while continuing to ensure national access to clinical trials.

Financial support for late effects and care programs will continue, as will the promotion of physical and mental health programs for survivors, embodying The Kids' Cancer Project's 'survive and thrive' mantra.

A refreshed Research Advisory Committee (RAC) – listed on Page 3 – will continue to enhance our research governance and processes, along with the inaugural Research Symposium in 2025.

The Kids' Cancer Project's Research Advisory Committee – an expert panel dedicated to thorough peer review process – independently review and rate all grant submissions made to The Kids' Cancer Project, with its broad skill set helping to future-proof the organisation in funding innovative research.

In FY'26, we will continue to strengthen our governance and reporting to ensure that every project provides twice-yearly updates on progress outcomes and impact. These reports are essential for demonstrating the value of our research and for guiding future funding decisions. We will also announce the next competitive project funding round – supporting new ideas and talent across the sector to help us deliver on our long-term strategy.



**Increase
research
investment to
\$7.5m
per annum
by 2029**



**Increase
research
support to
\$4.5m
per annum
by 2029**



**Increase
seed funding
ROI to
3.00
by 2029**



**Increase
co-funding
of projects to
50%
by 2029**

The Road Ahead

THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT 2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



ENGAGEMENT

Increased connection through storytelling, donor engagement and audience communication.



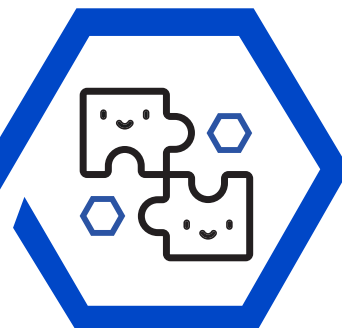
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Enhanced advocacy development and funding investment throughout the childhood cancer sector.



FUELLING GROWTH

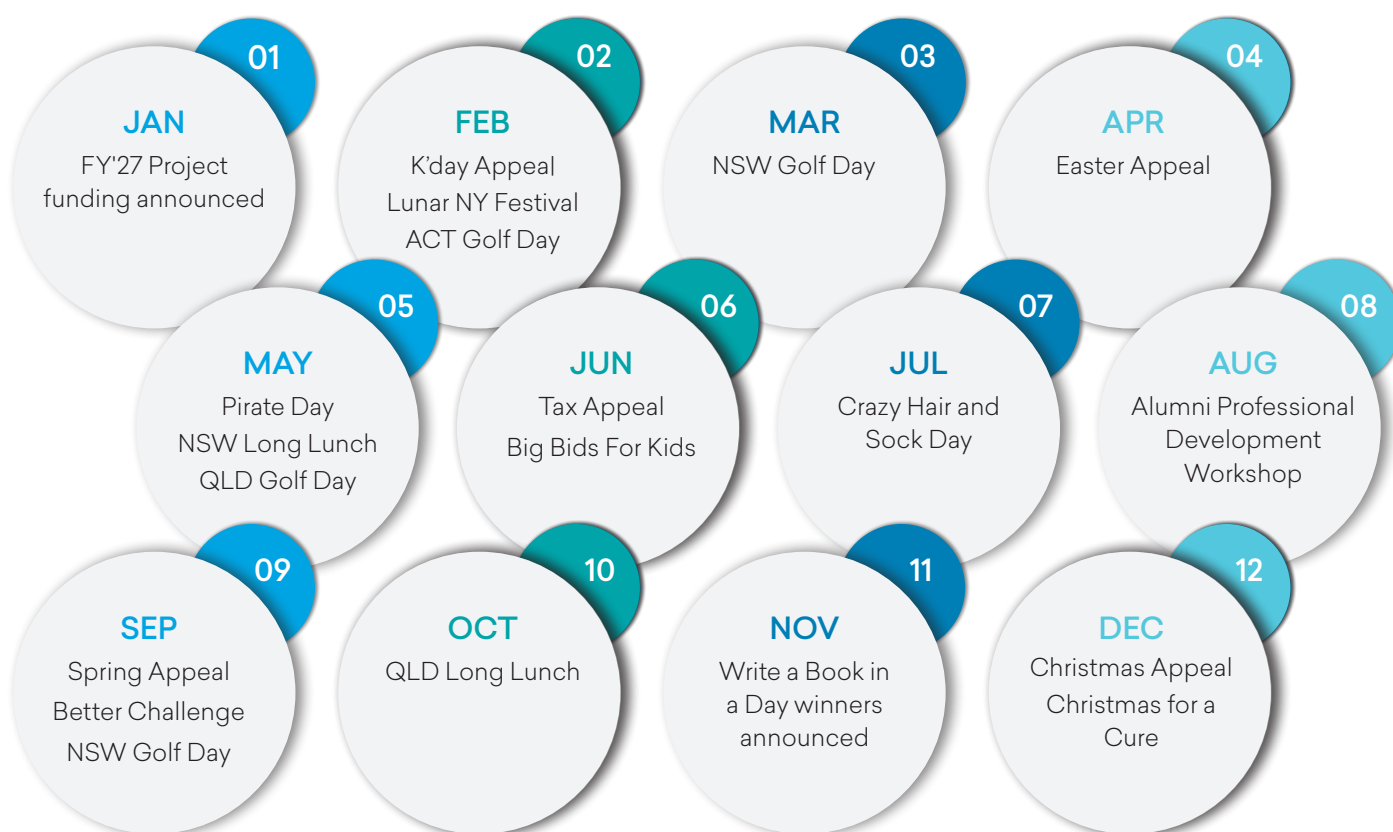
Sustainable acquisition through enhanced audience journeys and partnership development.



TEAM SYNERGY

Improved clarity, connection and opportunities through a unified and collaborative environment and culture.

WHAT'S ON IN 2026



2026 Research Projects

COL REYNOLDS FELLOWS

Name	Institution	Pillar
Dr Aaminah Khan	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Emmy Fleuren	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Kenny Ip	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Noemi Fuentes-Bolanos	University of New South Wales	Translate
Mr Philipp Graber	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Noa Lamm-Shalem	Children's Medical Research Institute	Discover
Ms Chelsea Valentin	University of New South Wales	Support
Dr Marion Mateos	Children's Cancer Institute	Translate
Dr Rachael Lawson	Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service	Translate
Dr Joseph Yang	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Translate
Dr Michelle Tennant	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Support
Dr Teresa Sadras	Olivia Newton John Cancer Research Institute	Discover
Ms Rachel Edwards	Queensland University of Technology	Translate
Dr Karin Plummer	Griffith University	Support
Dr Lorna McLeman	University of Melbourne	Translate
Dr Hannah Walker	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	Translate
Ms Jacqueline Hunter	University of Melbourne	Support
Mr Bryce Thomas	University of Newcastle	Discover
Dr Evangeline Jackson	University of Newcastle	Discover
Dr Katherine Pillman	University of South Australia	Discover
Dr David Mizrahi	University of Sydney	Support
Dr Ryan Cross	The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research	Discover
Dr Elizabeth Connolly	Children's Medical Research Institute	Discover

RESEARCH PROJECTS






Name	Institution	Pillar
Dr Geoff McCowage	Sydney Children's Hospital Network	Translate
Prof Nick Gottardo	The Kids Research Institute Australia	Translate
Prof Rishi Kotecha	The Kids Research Institute Australia	Translate
Ms Robyn Strong	Australian & New Zealand Children's Haematology/Oncology Group	Build
Prof David Ziegler	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Klaartje Somers	Children's Cancer Institute	Discover
Dr Jacqui McGovern	Queensland University of Technology	Discover
Prof Natalie Bradford	Queensland University of Technology	Support
Dr Tessa Gargett	South Australia Health	Discover
Dr Kate Vandyke	University of Adelaide	Discover
Prof Matt Dun	University of Newcastle	Discover
Prof Richard D'Andrea	University of South Australia	Discover
Dr Lauren Ha	University of New South Wales	Support



Rory, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) survivor



Ms Rachel Edwards, Queensland University of Technology

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THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT