



Hummingbird House

Queensland's only children's hospice

the humm

Spring 2021 edition

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Hummingbird House is a joint initiative
of Hummingbird House Foundation and
Wesley Mission Queensland.



A note from our GM

Welcome to our second edition of The Humm, which coincides with two very exciting events at Hummingbird House: our fifth birthday; and our state-wide Coles appeal.

Our fifth birthday is a milestone event for Hummingbird House, that provides us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the moments we have been privileged to witness and share with families during this time. It also reminds us that Hummingbird House is a truly unique place that holds space for grief and joy in equal measure, which we make space for every day.

Since opening, we have become a truly world-class hospice service. We have won national awards, seen the team acknowledged for their expertise by colleagues, and hosted international scholars hoping to learn more about what we do and how we do it.

In five years, we have nurtured and supported our team to grow, watching many of our clinicians work towards higher professional qualifications and our Family and Community Support team and Hummingbird House @ Home team more than triple in capacity and expertise. If this is what we can achieve in five years, imagine where we will be in 10!

Hummingbird House will however, always be guided by the most important people to have shared in our story: families. As such, our aspirations for the future are based on what we

have seen and heard from the hundreds of families we have walked alongside during this time, and our commitment to being here for every Queensland family that needs us, no matter where they live across the state.

This feels like a fitting segue to the Coles appeal, our biggest annual fundraiser, which will run across Queensland from 15 September to 13 October raising much needed funds for Hummingbird House. The Coles appeal, alongside community fundraisers like Officeworks' Round Up to Make a Difference campaign (page 8), are crucial to supporting the work we do, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the incredible community around us, that make our work possible.

On behalf of all of us at Hummingbird House, thank you for the last five years and I look forward to journeying alongside you for the next five years.

Dr Fiona Hawthorne
General Manager, WMQ Palliative Care Services

Reaching families across Queensland

Did you know that in 2020, Hummingbird House provided care and support to families from Northern New South Wales up to the Cape York Peninsula, spanning Kuranda, Ayr, Emerald, Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Nimbin and other regional areas?

We've also seen a 28 per cent increase in the number of regional families we are currently supporting, which demonstrates our commitment to operating a truly state-wide service.

The most frequently accessed services by families based in regional Queensland include symptom management, short break stays, end of life care, after death care and ongoing grief and bereavement support.

These services are accessed between Hummingbird House Brisbane and a family's home or community.

“ We speak with the Hummingbird House team regularly when we're at home and they have come to our house during their travels.

Having Hummingbird House has made a terrible experience bright and traded our fears for excitement. They've taught us how to care for Tilli, how to consider and face our feelings, how to ask for help when we need it, how to manage socially and emotionally, but mostly, they've shown us that we are far from alone.”

Nadine McAlister, Matilda's mum



Since opening our doors in 2016, Hummingbird House has provided care and support to 143 regional families across Queensland, like the McAlister family, who are based in Gin Gin, west of Bundaberg.



Meet our families

Matthew's story

"Matthew was one of the kindest boys I have ever met. He basically lived for football, or soccer, as the Australians call it." This is how Matthew's dad, Roly, remembers his happy, funny, 15-year-old son, who loved to tease his dad about his favourite team, Chelsea, which was the opposition to Matthew's team, Manchester City.

Matthew was a very active boy. In fact, it wasn't unusual for him to do a 10km bike ride before warming up for a soccer game, because he loved being on the move.

In 2019, Matthew collapsed whilst warming up for a football game and was rushed to hospital where it was revealed that he had a condition called Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma (DIPG), a rare brain tumour that affects the brain stem, and currently has no cure.

Matthew remained strong, happy and determined following his diagnosis, even though he was only given nine months to two years to live. He commenced radiation therapy at Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH) to see if it could prolong his life, and hydrotherapy after losing his ability to walk following an operation.

"He wanted to walk by Christmas. That was his wish," remembers Roly, and the determined teenager made his wish come true through hard work and dedication.

After the new year Matthew's condition began to deteriorate and Emma began to find it increasingly difficult to get Matthew to QCH because of his declining physical health. It was at this point that the family was referred to Hummingbird House, where they commenced hydrotherapy twice a week.

Emma remembers Matthew's friendly banter with the staff at Hummingbird House, which often left them in fits of giggles. She also remembers how warm and welcoming the house felt to the family, who spent so much time at hospital.

"We'd walk in, and within five minutes someone would bring me a cup of coffee, and some biscuits," smiles Emma. "It was such a warm and calming environment, you knew everyone and could feel that they had your best interests at heart. They always welcomed us and our whole family."



In addition to hydrotherapy, the family also enjoyed a stay at Hummingbird House, which they remember very fondly.

As the months went on, Matthew's condition continued to deteriorate, and Emma remembers the day their Hospital in the Home nurse gently explained that she didn't think Matthew was going to make it through the day.

"Andrea contacted me and asked me if I felt like some company, and when she visited, she sat with me at Matthew's bedside sharing a cuppa," Emma says softly. "I think Andrea could sense that I was feeling overwhelmed and scared that I would fall asleep and not do what I needed to do to make sure Matthew's brain could be donated for medical research into DIPG," she recalls, "so she arranged for an ambulance to take us to Hummingbird House."

At Hummingbird House Emma was given the time and space she needed to be with Matthew, without worrying about the medical side of things. And it was here, that Matthew took his final breath on 1 May 2020, with his mum by his side.

Matthew and his family were supported with after death care for a few days following his death, and the family remembers decorating the suite with his soccer jerseys, footballs signed by friends, and soccer boots. "We made it Matthew's place, so he could smile and be happy," they quietly recall.

The period following Matthew's death was a tricky one for the family, as Matthew had a large network of friends and extended family who wanted to celebrate his life and say their goodbyes, but it was right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Funerals were limited to 10 people during that time, but Hummingbird House applied for an exemption and managed to increase it to 20 people. This meant that some of Matthew's close friends were able to come to the funeral, which was important," Emma says.

Matthew's final goodbyes included a guard of honour at Hummingbird House, and a line up outside his school and the school Emma works at, in honour and celebration of his life.

"He was an inspiration to other kids," Roly smiles proudly. "He was loved for his dedication and determination. He always tried his best and was always happy, even to the end."



“ Hummingbird House needs to be there for everyone, because it allows families to be together and helps kids enjoy their last moments.”

A year on, Matthew's family remains deeply connected with Hummingbird House, where they made treasured memories and know they can turn to for grief and bereavement support.

"Hummingbird House is a place you don't realize you need until something happens, and you're then gob smacked at how much support there is," says Roly.



Watch Emma & Roly
share Matthew's story

Spotlight on our service

Hydro makes a splash with guests and families

As a paediatric palliative care service, Hummingbird House constantly seeks to improve the quality of life of our guests and families in meaningful ways. We do this using traditional approaches, such as hydro and music therapy; and non-traditional approaches, such as our Lego and stargazing workshops.

We work with each family to understand their goals and wishes and connect them to the right services to help make them a reality. In all cases, our end goal remains the same, which is to enhance the lives of our guests and families in ways that are meaningful to them.

Hydrotherapy is a specialised form of physiotherapy that's fun and impact-free. It also provides families the chance to jump in and have a splash together - which is a rare opportunity for many families - allowing them to create precious memories for years to come.

Hydrotherapy is almost every guest's happy place at Hummingbird House, and it's no wonder, seeing it has been shown to help muscles relax and allow pain-free movement.

The Hummingbird House hydrotherapy program is open to families staying at the House and families who choose to access it more frequently through their NDIS funding.



Physio Ericka with Zoey, Sarah and Anya

Photo courtesy of My Village News. Photography by Shona Bryan.

“ Zoey's favourite thing about Hummingbird House is the pool. During one of our stays, Anya and Zoey had a swim together in the pool. They both love the water and spent ages just floating and cuddling. Watching them enjoy the pool together is a beautiful memory that I'll always remember.”

Sarah Meyers, Zoey's mum

“It's always a pleasure for me to facilitate hydrotherapy at Hummingbird House. What I love the most is when it becomes a family affair. When siblings and parents join in on the fun, everyone has a smile on their face. We put on music, get the pool toys out, it basically becomes a pool party!”

Ericka Mira, Paediatric Physiotherapist

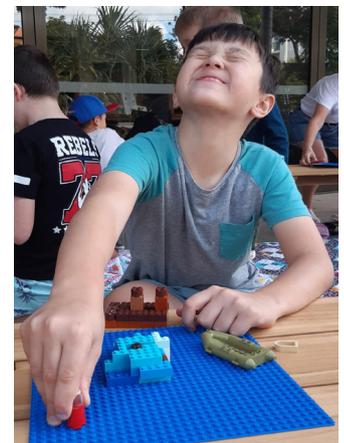
Lego day creates space for families to come together

In April this year, our Family and Community Support team hosted a Lego siblings day that brought a number of bereaved and non-bereaved families together at Hummingbird House.

This was an innovative addition to our regular events that bring families together for reflection and conversation, such as our monthly morning teas, creative art therapy sessions and more recently a star gazing event on the Hummingbird House rooftop.

The Lego siblings day was a lot of fun and a huge success, with the kids bonding over their creations, while parents and grandparents were offered a facilitated space to connect and reflect with our staff on life, grief and everything in between.

This is just another way that Hummingbird House opens our doors and extends our warm embrace to the families we walk alongside.



Our supporters



Officeworks Windsor

Officeworks managers meeting

Officeworks Virginia

Hummingbirdhouse

Officeworks rounds up and raises \$130k!

In June 2021, 11 Officeworks stores across Queensland came together as part of their annual 'Round Up to Make a Difference' campaign and raised a phenomenal \$130,000 for Hummingbird House!

Over 30 days, the staff at Officeworks Aspley, Cairns, Morayfield, Maroochydore, Noosaville, North Lakes, Rothwell, Strathpine, Virginia, Warana and Windsor supported the campaign by asking "would you like to round up the cost of your purchase and support Hummingbird House?" demonstrating that you can give a little and change a lot. Our thanks go to these amazing stores and their local communities for their generosity and support, which will allow us to continue to expand Hummingbird House @ Home, the community arm of our service, reaching families right across Queensland.



Officeworks Windsor

Our champions in the community

Thanks to our wonderful community of supporters who tirelessly fundraise for Hummingbird House! Here are just some of our many highlights from the last six months.

Follow us on Facebook to read more about their stories!



Your donations make a difference



Thank you for supporting Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice, and one of only three children's hospices in Australia. Your generous donation will extend the reach of our service and help provide vital services to families loving and caring for a child with a life-limiting condition.

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- One time gift Monthly Quarterly Yearly

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Expiry & Signature /

Please remove this slip and post to **Locked Bag 7005, Chermiside South QLD 4032.**



National award for innovation in palliative care

In September 2021, the Queensland Children's Hospital's Paediatric Palliative Care Service, in collaboration with Hummingbird House and Queensland University of Technology, were awarded the "Team Innovation in Palliative Care Award" at the annual Palliative Care Australia Awards event.

The award recognises a collaborative project that uses tele-health to support rural and regional families across Queensland who are loving and caring for a child with a life-limiting condition.

Hummingbird House is proud to be a part of a collaboration that brings together the knowledge and expertise of three organisations to support families in need.



Hummingbird House is a joint initiative of Hummingbird House Foundation and Wesley Mission Queensland. Wesley Mission Queensland (ABN: 28 746 881 862) is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) with charity tax concessions, endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

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Meet our team



Name:
Ainsley Stock

Position:
Nurse Navigator

Time with us:
4 years

Ainsley Stock

Tell us about yourself and what drew you to Hummingbird House?

I've been interested in palliative care for quite a while and value the holistic way in which it cares for a guest, family and broader community. At Hummingbird House we meet children and families in hospital, in the hospice, and in their homes. Getting to know families and hearing their stories is such an honour. There is strength, resilience, and ingenuity amongst the vulnerability.

How would you describe Hummingbird House to someone who has never visited us?

Hummingbird House is a place where families can be heard and live according to their priorities. Whether it's making memories, spending quality time together, or going on a date night - our different teams have their own focus of care, while working together to care for children with life-limiting conditions, from birth to adulthood. I love that Hummingbird House @ Home can support families in their place of comfort, without disrupting their family routines or participation in regular activities, but allowing them to get rest.

What does a typical day 'in the office' look like for you?

I don't really have a typical day! I usually spend my days meeting new families and supporting them to understand how our service can be most helpful to them. I also serve as a central point of communication for Hummingbird House families, staff and external teams - like the Queensland Children Hospital's Paediatric Palliative Care Service, to make sure there is information flowing between key people in a child's life. I enjoy working so closely with families and working across teams.

What's one of your favourite memories at the House?

It's very hard for me to choose just one memory! I've enjoyed some very special quiet moments with families, some serious fun being chased by a sibling with a garden hose, learning alongside colleagues, and providing education to other services. I remember the time I spent with Paul and Gabrielle Quilliam around the opening of Hummingbird House with great fondness. Their passion and poetry for Hummingbird House was inspiring and carries me today.



Hummingbird House

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