

### **IMPACT REPORT** 2022-23 VARIETY - THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY NSW/ACT





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**Our Vision** For all Australian children to reach their full potential, regardless of ability or background.



**Our Mission** To empower Australian children who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with a disability to live, laugh and learn.

# **Chair Message**

It was another year of innovation for Variety NSW/ACT with new grants introduced, new records set and even a new CEO.

Over the past three years, we - like so many others in the community have faced significant challenges. Covid caused a major shift in how we work and socialise, and fundraising was not exempt.

However, as we have progressed through 2023, it was encouraging to see the outcomes being achieved as communities come together with a renewed sense of empathy and compassion for others.

As always, I am indebted to the wonderful Variety staff, donors, volunteers, fundraisers and corporate partners whose commitment to our great cause has continued to generate these magnificent results for families and children in need.



Results like a record number of 13 Variety Sunshine Coaches granted to schools and community organisations - ensuring those kids who often miss out are able to join in.

And our new We Thrive and We Care Therapy Grants, developed specifically to provide financial support where children and young people need it most.

These achievements are dependent upon the generosity of our supporters, so I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who shares our mission of empowering children who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with a disability.

I would also like to thank, on your behalf, the board for their support and dedication over the past 12 months.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the kind heart and steady hand of David Small who held the Variety reins for most of the year before our new CEO, Tony Warner, was appointed in September.

I am grateful for David's ongoing efforts as Executive Director of Variety Australia and I am thrilled to welcome Tony who comes to us with a wealth of international management experience across the disability, mobility equipment, refugee, therapy and youth at risk sectors.

I look forward to working with Tony and harnessing his expertise as Variety commits to creating a future where every child, regardless of circumstance or ability, can be supported, included and equal.

Dr Greg Levenston Variety NSW/ACT Chair

# **CEO** Message

The past 12 months have seen Variety NSW/ACT deliver significant outcomes for many children and families that would not have been possible without our wonderful supporters.

But as we turn our attention to the coming year, we know we have more to do.

Families have told us about the challenges they face; whether that is the gaps in government support, waiting times to access services or a parent's concern regarding the loss of dignity their child is experiencing because of the stigma associated with a medical diagnosis.

On their own, these challenges are formidable, impacting not only the individual but their siblings, parents and carers. Compounding the challenges for many families are secondary issues such as living in a remote location, residency status and lack of accessibility on public transport and buildings.

Variety understands the complexity of disadvantage and disability. We recognise that, through no fault of their own, families can experience vulnerability and we seek to stand with families, providing practical and tangible opportunities through support, education and therapy.

2023/24 will see Variety NSW/ACT increase our impression as we strive to provide a deeper impact to a greater number of people through our existing programs and add a new one, responding to the unmet needs of families in regional NSW.

Our new 'Flying Start' program will connect children and young people in Western NSW living with disability with allied health clinics through Variety-branded charter flights, flying a team of two speech pathologists and two occupational therapists from Dubbo to Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Bourke and Brewarrina.

The Flying Start program will then be extended to include the only fly-in fly-out model for paediatric NDIS diagnosis assessments in NSW.

It is this commitment to listening to the needs of families and communities, and working collaboratively to deliver complex social outcomes, that excites me about what is yet to come and how, with your help, we can strive to support children experiencing disability and disadvantage.

Tony Warner Variety NSW/ACT CEO







# **How We Help**

### Your Impact

With your help, we ensure children have the best opportunity to live life more fully, regardless of ability or background. The work we do gives children the opportunity to improve mobility, gain freedom and get involved in their community, where they can better communicate, achieve independence and increase their self-esteem.

Thanks to your support, we help kids with these challenges:



By delivering support to NSW/ACT kids in the following ways:

• GRANTS • PROGRAMS • EVENTS

TOTAL COMMITTED TO HELPING KIDS IN NEED: \$3.88 million

### Thanks to your support in 2022/23, we impacted:





children in NSW/ACT

#### NUMBER OF GRANTS **PROVIDED IN 2022/23**

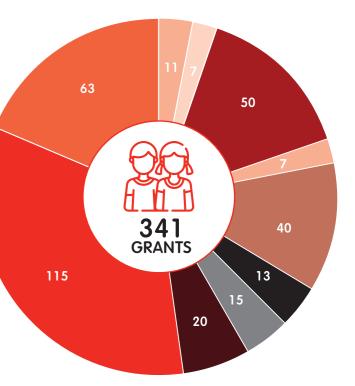




12,127 **STUDENTS ACROSS 46 NSW & ACT SCHOOLS** ATTENDED JUST LIKE YOU



6 IMPACT REPORT 2022-23





1,769 CHILDREN ATTENDED XMAS PARTIES



"Being able to have the bikes at school just means freedom, independence and happiness."

# **We Join**

Variety promotes inclusivity for all Australian children - no matter their circumstances. We invite schools and not-for-profit organisations to apply for We Join Grants to improve access for children in their community. Whether it's library resources, musical instruments or canteen equipment, grants are offered to those looking to purchase equipment that will benefit young people in need.

We approved seven We Join Community Grants this year, including a grant of adaptive bikes to Fernhill School, a school for specific purposes (SSP) in Glenmore Park, NSW. Julie, a teacher at Fernhill School, and Tina, parent to Mikey, are thrilled with the new bikes.

"Our mission statement is 'Independence Through Learning.' One of our biggest challenges is providing diverse activities for our students as equipment is so expensive so we need to be resourceful where we can. We looked to Variety for help and we are just so grateful for the new adaptive bikes as they offer a range of benefits to our kids. Obviously, the physical benefits but also the social interactions they're having with their friends. They have provided a different activity for our students to get out of their wheelchairs and enjoy. It's wonderful to see our kids on equipment that perhaps they haven't been on before, a lot of our students may have never ridden a bike. We're also getting our high school students to help our younger students to use the bikes so they've just really brought all of our students and our school community together." - Julie, Teacher, Fernhill School.

"Mikey is my middle child. He's always happy, he's always smiling. He loves the outdoors and is just always on the go. The bikes definitely give him independence. Being adaptive they give him the opportunity to get out there and they give him a sense of freedom really, just him being able to do what other kids can do and not being left out. It makes me happy because I know he's enjoying himself. He's also building his gross motor skills, as well as other skills that help him throughout life. Thank you to Variety. Being able to have the bikes at school just means freedom, independence and happiness." - Tina, mum to Mikey, Fernhill School student.

WE JOIN -COMMUNITY GRANTS

"When Emily's wig arrived, she didn't take it off for three days! She showered in it, she jumped up and down on our bed in it and it was truly the most amazing thing to see her confidence soar once again."

# We Care

Every year, hundreds of children who have been diagnosed with a disability or long-term health condition have to face long wait times for an NDIS plan or are ineligible for NDIS support altogether. That's why we created the We Care Therapy grant – to provide financial assistance towards therapy costs to assist children who need it most. In its inaugural year, we provided 115 children with We Care Therapy Grants valued at \$230,000.

We also provided 20 children with We Care Wig Grants. These wigs are for children who have lost their hair due to alopecia and other medical conditions. Losing your hair can have profound psychological effects, particularly through childhood and adolescence. One specialised wig can cost up to \$6,000 and may only last two to three years, so the cost is prohibitive for manyfamilies.

Kelly's daughter, Emily, received a wig grant recently and she shared her gratitude with us.

"Emily was a confident, happy little girl when we first noticed her hair loss. At first, it was just the size of a 50cent piece but within five months, all her hair had fallen

### 135 WF CARF GRANTS



out and over the next five months, she lost her eyelashes, her eyebrows and all the hair from her legs and arms."

"We bought her a synthetic wig to make her feel more comfortable but she lived in fear of it coming off so she had to give up dancing – which she loved – and she couldn't hang upside down in gymnastics so she gave that up too."

"I couldn't believe how lucky we were when our Variety wig grant application was accepted. When Emily's wig arrived, she didn't take it off for three days! She showered in it, she jumped up and down on our bed in it and it was truly the most amazing thing to see her confidence soar once again."

"Suddenly, she could go swimming at her friend's houses, she was able to take part in sleepovers, she could go back to gymnastics - it was incredible!"

"The hardest part of being a parent is when things happen to your kids that are out of your control. I'm so grateful to Variety for providing not only the wig itself but also the sense of relief and comfort that it has brought our family."



# We Move

Variety NSW/ACT provides grants for the purchase of life-changing equipment to increase physical development, independence and social inclusion. The We Move grant was designed to deliver disability equipment that is not easily available through statutory services such as the NDIS.

We provided 11 We Move grants valued at a total of \$91,284 last year, bringing joy and support to families just like Marwan's.

Marwan's mum, Zeenathul, knew something wasn't quite right with her second born son when he was having difficulty moving his little body at just six weeks of age.

"I took him to the GP and he was very quickly transferred to the hospital for gene testing and a range of physical assessments. He was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type 1 the very next day," she said.

Marwan's diagnosis affects his muscle movement so as he grows, the family is always looking into options to keep Marwan comfortable, safe and mobile.

"He had his first mobility device when he was 12 months old and that lasted him for two years before he outgrew it and he began using a power wheelchair. The power wheelchair is useful in some circumstances, but we can't take it to the shops, to the hospital or to the park as we don't have an accessible vehicle to transport it," said Zeenathul.

"We have been using a stroller but Marwan has now outgrown that and, given he also has scoliosis, it's really no longer safe for him to be in a stroller for very long."

When the NDIS declined the family's application for a manual wheelchair, Zeenathul applied for a Variety We Move grant to cover the steep \$17,000 cost.

"We have had to make a number of modifications to our home recently to make it safer and easier for Marwan to get around and we just couldn't see a way to afford another large expense," she said.

Marwan's new wheelchair will make a world of difference to him and his family.

"The new wheelchair is easy to fold, its easily transportable and so adaptable for use in all kinds of different community settings. It also means Marwan can use his hands to push the wheels so it's great for him as well – if he doesn't want to wait for us to push him, he has the freedom and independence to do things for himself."

"We are just so grateful to Variety for making this happen – we never imagined they would be able to help this much!'

> "The new wheelchair is easy to fold, its easily transportable and so adaptable for use in all kinds of different community settings. "





## We Learn

Our We Learn Grant was introduced in 2021 to give families experiencing financial hardship the chance to apply for support for educational technology. At the time, students across the country were learning from home given ongoing Covid-19 lockdowns and the demand for laptops was overwhelming with Variety receiving a staggering 1435 applications – a record for any grant we have ever offered. This year, just 50 We Learn Grants were provided as the demand for new technology has drastically reduced with the return to classroom learning.





# We Thrive

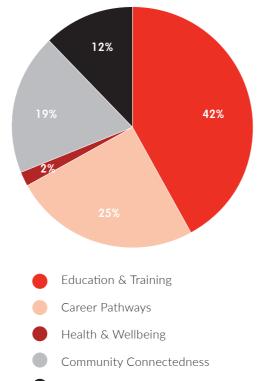
A new initiative introduced in February, our We Thrive grants are exclusively for young people living in out-of-home or kinship care and provide funds that can be used on a wide range of expenses. The grants are designed to ease the often-difficult transition to independent living and a career path – be that university,TAFE, an apprenticeship or other employment pathways.

The period of transition into independent living is a critical point in time when young people can drop from the system that has supported them and find themselves heading down an unfamiliar and unwelcome pathway.

The We Thrive pilot program would not be possible without the generous support of Andrew Pratten Charitable Trust. Through their funding, the current pilot is supporting a cohort of 15 young people, who are now pursuing dreams, goals and opportunities that were previously beyond their reach. The pilot will run for the next three years, after which the results will be evaluated.

"The period of transition into independent living a is a critical point in time when young people can drop from the system that has supported them and find themselves heading down an unfamiliar and unwelcome pathway."

#### HOW FUNDS ARE BEING SPENT



Independent Living

**15** WE THRIVE GRANTS

# Variety Sunshine Coaches

Our Variety Sunshine Coaches bring sunshine into the lives of thousands of children each week and are a key part of Variety's vital work for kids in need.

Last year, your incredible support allowed us to grant a record-breaking 13 Variety Sunshine Coaches to a range of schools and community organisations catering for children living with a disability or a chronic illness, as well as those experiencing financial hardship or geographic isolation.

The coaches provide transport for children to access their community and to experience a range of special programs and activities they would otherwise be unable to attend. Thanks to special wheelchair modifications, the coaches ensure all children can join in excursions and extracurricular activities.

Anson St School in the Central West NSW city of Orange is a Sunshine Coach recipient and Principal, Melanie Meers, is delighted with their 22-seater vehicle.

"If you came to our school and saw the joy that having something like a Sunshine Coach gives a child, it just makes such a big difference," she said.

17-year-old Daisy is a student at the school and her parents, Anna and Garth, agreed.

"We knew Anson Street would give Daisy great opportunities that she wouldn't otherwise get and the Sunshine Coach is just one example of these opportunities."

"The Variety Sunshine Coach gives children such as Daisy the chance to experience everything that other students can access and Daisy always comes home feeling confident and 'bulletproof' after these experiences."



"If you came to our school and saw the joy that having something like a Sunshine Coach gives a child, it just makes such a big difference." "The scholarship means so much to our family. It will not only make it possible for Emma to continue with her regular lessons, but it will also give her the chance to travel to attend training camps and experience large orchestral environments."





This year, Variety awarded \$294,000 in Variety Heart Scholarships enabling 63 children across NSW and the ACT to pursue their sporting or artistic dreams.

Variety Heart Scholarships support young people with an existing talent who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with a disability.

The scholarships are open to school-aged children who are passionate and proficient in their chosen field – from violin and cello to circus arts, skateboarding and ice skating.

Since 2017, the scholarships have been made possible thanks to the generous support of our presenting partner, The Grahame Mapp Family Foundation, in honour of the late Gillian Mapp.

The Grahame Mapp Family Foundation's commitment to the scholarship program continues to unlock opportunities that were once beyond these children's reach.

When Emma, 16, was recently awarded a Variety Heart Scholarship for her talent as a violinist, her mum Jessica shared the profound and lifelong impact with us. "We do our best to provide Emma with enriching and educational experiences and provide her with the foundation she needs to succeed but all of these costs add up very quickly," said Jessica.

"The scholarship means so much to our family. It will not only make it possible for Emma to continue with her regular lessons, but it will also give her the chance to travel to attend training camps and experience large orchestral environments," said Jessica.

"There are limited opportunities for local kids to take part in large orchestras so for her to have the chance to be taught by very talented tutors and conductors and further develop her musical education, it will be life-changing!"

Emma aspires to study music composition and complete a music degree with the Sydney Conservatorium when she finishes high school.

"The Variety Heart Scholarship is making it possible for Emma to pursue her dreams of becoming a music composer," said Jessica.





#### STUDENTS TRIED NEW SPORTS

Variety Activate Inclusion Sports Days are a free, fun and inclusive day of sport catered to kids with a physical disability, living in regional communities or experiencing social disadvantage. Aimed at kids aged 5-18 with behavioural, intellectual, sensory and physical disabilities, these days give kids an opportunity to 'have a go' in a fun and inclusive environment.

This year, Variety Activate Inclusion Sports Days gave nearly 2,500 students at 160 different schools the opportunity to try new sports.



This year, Variety's Just Like You program reached over 12,000 kids at 46 different schools. The Just Like You program is a series of vital educational and awareness workshops that aim to build understanding, acceptance and inclusion of those living with a disability. These free and fun awareness workshops are delivered by facilitators who themselves live with disability, which in turn helps build empathetic kids by increasing their understanding of both hidden and visible disabilities.

"It made me feel happy that other people with disabilities can still do things. At first, I didn't know what a disability was until we did this workshop. It made me change a lot" - Year 4 Student, Central Coast, NSW

"There's lots of different types of disability, especially hidden disabilities – you can't see them. People have lots going on and you don't even know" - Year 4 Student, Central Coast, NSW

"Everyone should be treated the same. It doesn't matter about different stuff. It's good just to be a good person to everyone" - Year 4 Student, Central Coast, NSW

"There was a kid in my class that has ADHD and he had a big meltdown and people were actually trying to stay calm that day. I think my class has been more understanding to him as he has big shouts every day" - Year 4 Student, Central Coast, NSW







For nearly 30 years, Variety has spread festive joy to thousands of children who are experiencing illness, disadvantage or living with a disability through our annual Variety Kids Xmas Parties. In 2022, we hosted two events that saw nearly 2,000 kids experience the festivities.

The Newcastle Variety Xmas Party was back in full force at McDonald Jones Stadium, delivering fun and excitement with amusement rides, petting zoos, arts and crafts, face painting, bongo drums, a silent disco and of course, a special gift from Santa Claus. The Newcastle Knights and the Women's League showed off their skills and signed autographs, the fire brigade came to say g'day and roving costume characters delighted the kids. A special thanks to the 120 volunteers who dedicated their time and energy and helped to make the day a success. The Sydney Variety Xmas Party was hosted at Sydney Zoo in Bungarribee, Western Sydney, where we celebrated the magic of the festive season with kids, families and carers. Children enjoyed face painting, a craft zone, ferris wheel rides, roaming character costumes and a gift from "Santa Claws" and his reptile friends. Australian country music legend and Variety Ambassador, John Williamson, even made an appearance.

Thank you to our incredible event sponsors, Sydney Zoo and McDonald Jones Stadium, as well as Woolworths for providing fresh food and water to all the children and families who attended. We are also incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who help make running these events possible! "It's always good to volunteer in such an environment where everyone's effort can be seen directly on the faces of the kids that deserve it. A brilliant charity with direct impact on those that need it most." Michael Scott, Volunteer











# Our Regional Focus

Variety Motoring events travel across all areas of Australia to support kids in need, regardless of how remote or regional they may be. Some of these children may have to travel great distances for medical appointments, educational opportunities and sporting competitions. We help to ensure all kids can attain their full potential regardless of their background.

This year, 40 We Join – Motoring Grants were provided to schools and community organisations in regional areas as part of our extensive program of motoring events.

These infamous events support the delivery of Variety's mission including bringing tens of thousands of dollars in grants to local schools for much needed technology, playground equipment and educational resources. This is without mentioning the tourism dollars injected into regional communities with lunch and overnight stops along the routes.

Our motoring events have a long tradition of giving participants the chance to explore country towns that aren't always on the map. Our Bash Cars are renowned for bringing fun and excitement to far-reaching corners of the country, bringing smiles to the faces of local families who rarely have visitors.

Thank you to our incredible fundraisers who engage their wider community to help fund our grants, programs and scholarship for kids in need. We are grateful to our generous partners, sponsors and supporters for making the dreams of so many children a reality.



#### Variety Postie Bike Dash

This year, our incredible Variety Postie Bike Dash saw 61 bikes, including 21 new participants, travel 1324km to raise funds for kids in need. The Dashers granted a total of \$35,000 in equipment and resources to seven schools along the route. A thank you to our event sponsors First National Real Estate, Tamex Transport and Australia Post.

#### Variety 4WD Adventure

The 2023 Variety 4WD Adventure 'Mountain Mayhem' had 66 Adventurers travel from Coffs Harbour (NSW) to Lamington National Park (Southeast Queensland). This event granted equipment and resources to three community organisations along the route - Redfins Swim Club Glen Innes, Girl Guides Warwick and Emerge Toowoomba.

Variety 4WD

ADVENTURI

The Variety NSW Bash had 312 Bashers in over 100 Bash Cars travel from Dubbo to Newcastle via Echuca, visiting 12 schools along the way. The Bashers granted \$80,000 in equipment and resources to these schools. A special thank you to our sponsors Australian Hotels Association Newcastle Hunter and Regional Australia Bank.



#### Variety B to B Bash

Variety NSW Bash

Our original Bash event, the 2023 Variety B to B Bash saw 219 Bashers travel across the country from Bathurst (NSW) to the Batavia Coast (WA) in August. We stopped at nine schools along the way, granting \$70,000 in equipment and resources to help kids in need.

#### Variety Adventure Ride

In 2023, the Variety Adventure Ride had 17 riders travel 3,284km from Dubbo to Lightning Ridge via the epic Flinders Ranges. They stopped at three schools and community groups along the route, granting \$25,000 in equipment and resources.





### Thank You, Woolworths Team & Customers

The partnership between Variety and Woolworths Supermarkets in New South Wales and the ACT has been a collaboration of compassion and commitment since 2013.

This year, we are proud to be celebrating an incredible fundraising milestone of \$15 million! On behalf of all the children we support who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with a disability, we wholeheartedly thank Woolworths customers and team members for their incredible support.

Our Small Change Appeals held in October 2022 and March/April 2023 raised over \$1,050,000 across NSW and ACT. This is a true testament to the generosity of Woolworths customers who continue to make a positive impact on the lives of children and families in need.

Across thousands of kilometres, the Woolies team have journeyed with us to remote country towns and isolated communities, hosted community BBQs and raised funds as part of our legendary motoring events. Joining us on the NSW Bash, the Woolie-saurus team took one of the top fundraising spots!

Whether it's at a Family Fun Day, Kids Xmas Party or Community Fresh Fair, we have come together with one mission in mind – to help bring joy to kids in need.

Again, thank you to every Woolworths customer who purchased a token or rounded up at self-serve checkout. Every donation has contributed to a milestone that would not have been possible without your kindness. And thank you to Woolworths team members for your tireless enthusiasm for our partnership which has been crucial to its success.

As we look towards the next decade, we know that together we can make a lasting difference in the lives of children facing adversity, empowering them to overcome challenges and build brighter futures.

### Thank You, Grahame Mapp Family Foundation

Since 2017, The Grahame Mapp Family Foundation has made an extraordinary difference to the lives of young people in NSW and ACT through their sponsorship of the Variety Heart Scholarship program.

In honour of the late Gillian Mapp, The Grahame Mapp Foundation has empowered talented young people to overcome financial and physical barriers and access the support needed to pursue their dreams.

As one of the founding members of Variety Australia, Grahame Mapp has played an integral role in shaping our vision to create a future where every child can feel supported, included and equal, regardless of circumstance or ability.

On behalf of every child who has received a Variety Heart Scholarship, we thank the Grahame Mapp Family Foundation for helping dreams come true.

Josh - Variety Heart Scholarship Recipient 2023

"My Variety Heart Scholarship will help fund my gymnastics training as I live two and a half hours away from the NSW High Performance Centre and more than an hour from my home club where I train 5 - 6 times a week.

It will also help relieve financial pressure on my family and allow them to enjoy the journey a little bit more with me. My family have supported me every step of the way from injury to podium, they are always there.

For the next 18 months, I will be focused on staying injury free and qualifying for my first international competition which will take me closer to my ultimate goal of representing Australia in Men's Gymnastics."





### **MAJOR PARTNERS**



#### PARTNERS

Australia Post Australian Hotels Association Newcastle Hunter Daracon Group First National Real Estate International Convention and Exhibition Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) Orica Pickles Pty Ltd Regional Australia Bank Sage Sydney Zoo Tamex Transport Shore Hire



### MAJOR DONORS

Andrew Pratten Charitable Trust Lucy Giumelli Saini Trust Marie Taylor Trust The Shirley Ward Foundation

### **SUPPORTERS**

Allied Couriers Bayer CommBank Staff Foundation Endeavour Energy Essential Energy Fitness First McDonald Jones Stadium Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group St Marys Rugby League Club The Forum





#### **Become a Volunteer**

From individual to corporate volunteering, we are always looking for people to join in the fun. Corporate volunteering with Variety is a wonderful way to create a deeper engagement with your workforce and make a big difference in little lives. To find out more, visit www.variety.org.au/nsw/getinvolved/corporates/volunteer/





### Join an Event

Taking part in a Variety fundraising event is an exciting and fun way to raise funds for children in need. As well as helping kids and their families, events are a wonderful opportunity to connect with Variety supporters and experience what it means to be part of the Variety family. Visit www.variety. org.au/nsw/events/ to discover upcoming events in 2024.



#### Stay in Touch

variety.org.au/nsw

(02) 9819 1000 

contactus@varietynsw.org.au

# (in)

### THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We couldn't run all our events and programs without the support provided by our dedicated volunteers. To everyone who has lent a hand during 2023, we say a big Variety THANK YOU!

Thanks to the support and generosity of our incredible community, Variety has helped give children the opportunity to live life more fully, regardless of ability or background. And the great news is that you can help too!





#### Make a Donation

a big difference to kids and families throughout NSW and the ACT. Your donation will help to fund scholarships and experiences so visit https://fundraise. varietynswact.org.au/ to play



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