

Our Impact 2021-22

Variety - the Children's
Charity of Queensland



*Made possible,
thanks to you.*

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and Chief Executive Officer

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Imagine a world where
all kids get the same
opportunities, no matter
their ability or circumstance.

9 year old Cruz



Thank you

from the Board Chair and
Chief Executive Officer

From our Board Chair

Over the last few years **uncertainty** has been a consistent theme across the globe. But in that uncertainty, here at Variety Queensland we have focused on **hope**.

So many children now have the opportunity to do what they're passionate about, to pursue their dreams and enjoy the wonder of childhood - thanks to you.

You have ensured that when a child is sick, suffering through disadvantage or living with a disability and asks for our help, we can be there. Often, we are the last hope for these families to get the support they desperately need.

This year we have supported over **8,000** kids right across Queensland. For some, it is as simple as providing them with 'Back to School' supplies that they cannot afford. Or as inspirational as helping them pursue their dreams by fostering their efforts to excel in sport, education and the arts.

We have also invested in long-term, large-scale programs to create generational change for kids and their families. Our **Financial Counselling for Families** program helps families suffering financial hardship by advocating for them and educating them to manage their own finances.

Our **Financial Literacy** program is an Australian-first initiative that teaches real-life money skills to kids living with a disability. It focuses on protecting their interests and giving kids the skills and understanding they need to ensure they don't fall into a cycle of poverty in the future.

Thank you for supporting kids in need and for giving them the same opportunities as others, no matter their ability or circumstance.

Nick Harwood
Board Chair, Variety Queensland



From our Chief Executive Officer

If the last few years have taught me anything, it is how resilient people can be.

The ongoing pressure created by the pandemic, along with the increased cost of living, means that most families are experiencing hardship and we are seeing this first-hand.

Families in Queensland caring for a sick child, or a child living with a disability have felt an even greater strain.

This year our **Financial Counselling for Families** program, supported by the AMP Foundation, has seen a **300%** increase in families taking up this service.

Our groundbreaking **Financial Literacy** program started in five special schools in South East Queensland and expanded to **13** schools over the year, with more coming on board each term.

We also established **Money Buddy** - a financial helpline service that kids living with a disability can call to speak with a qualified Variety Financial Counsellor in real-time. This is a vital service that is already having a massive impact!

Every dollar you raised and every minute you gave to Variety this year helped more than **8,000** kids pursue their dreams. We were able to distribute **\$1,492,587** so Queensland kids could receive life-changing practical equipment, programs and experiences.

In this report you'll find some heartfelt stories - like little Miller, the Ogden family and Dominic - that truly show how you are making a difference in their lives.

Thank you for your enduring support this year.

Steve Wakerley
Chief Executive Officer, Variety Queensland



OUR VISION

For all Queensland kids to reach their full potential regardless of their ability or background.

OUR MISSION

To empower Queensland kids who are sick, disadvantaged or living with a disability to live, laugh and learn.

Our 3 pillars of care

Thanks to you, Variety is able to help kids each and every day living with these challenges:



Sick



Disadvantaged



Disability

Why we do what we do

We believe all kids should be able to follow their dreams and be the best they can be. No matter what life throws at them. No matter their ability.

Each year, thousands of kids who are sick, disadvantaged or living with a disability, get support from Variety when they need it most.

HOW WE HELP

With your help, we support kids in need all year round through:

GRANTS

We deliver practical help for medical and mobility equipment, therapy, communication devices, learning aids and transport.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We support kids with an existing talent to reach their potential in the arts, education or sport.



PROGRAMS

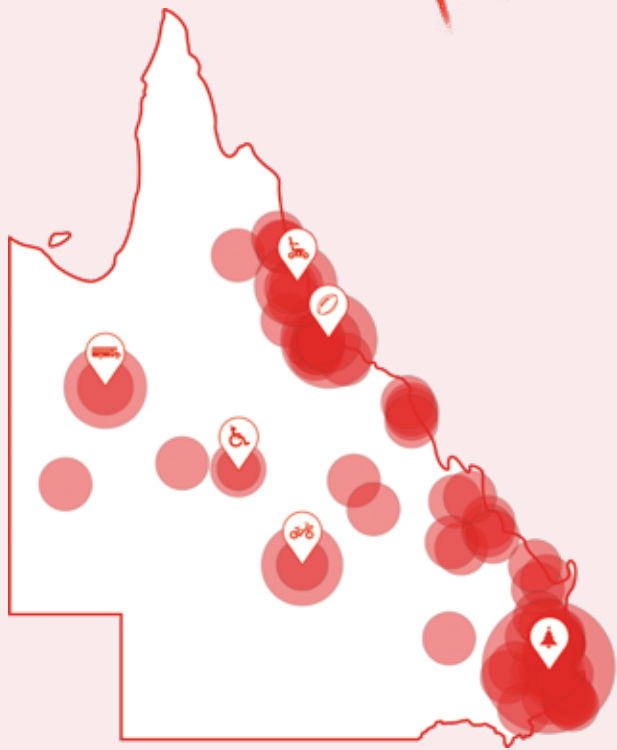
We offer educational and inclusive programs that help kids to shine.



EXPERIENCES

We host events where kids and their families can make new friends, relax and create special memories.

Thanks to you:



Some of our
impact highlights

	\$30,000	Mission Beach Electric Wheelchair
	\$50,000	Townsville Sports Camp
	\$47,000	Julia Creek School Bus
	\$7,500	Eimeo Floating Wheelchair
	\$20,000	Tambo Bikes for Kids
	\$175,000	Brisbane Special Children's Christmas Party

8,957

kids supported by
Variety Queensland



213

grants and scholarships
awarded

\$1,492,587

was distributed so
Queensland kids could
receive **life-changing**
equipment, programs
and experiences

222

community touchpoints for
programs



Year on year
this is a

43%

increase in the funds we distributed to
help **Queensland kids in need.**

*The Impact
You've Created*

Meet Jackson

Jackson has dreams of playing his favourite sport - AFL. But Jackson has cerebral palsy, and each day presents challenges.



Jackson's power wheelchair wasn't suitable for high-intensity sports like AFL. To properly excel, Jackson needed a specialised sports wheelchair which was financially out of reach. That's when his family turned to Variety for support.

We were able to provide Jackson with a grant for a lightweight, custom sports wheelchair.

The first time Jackson used his new sports wheelchair was playing footy with some of his favourite players from the Gold Coast Suns AFLW Team!

It's a day that he will never forget.

Did you know?

Jackson is just one of many kids Variety has been able to provide life-changing mobility equipment for this year. Kids like Jackson are able to follow their dreams, thanks to generous donors like you.



What makes a sports wheelchair so special?

The wheelchair design ensures that Jackson's feet and legs are safely contained while playing sport, which is not possible in a manual wheelchair. It is incredibly light, balanced, and manoeuvrable. Ideal for a budding AFL player!

Meet Dominic

One night when he was nine years old, Dominic's life changed forever. He was lying in a CT machine at a local hospital after two weeks of agonising back pain.

The results came back and it was heartbreaking news. Doctors had found a large tumour compressing Dominic's lower spine. He was transferred to Queensland Children's Hospital and his parents Thou and San were told their son had a malignant sarcoma on his spine affecting both his bone and tissue.

It was aggressive, large and spreading quickly.



After his first emergency operation, Dominic woke up and could no longer walk. He has spent months in rehabilitation to strengthen his upper body to help him move around.

Overnight, Dominic's days went from outdoors to indoors.

Young Dominic went from being outside most days to being stuck in a hospital room for more than three months. He underwent an emergency operation, secondary surgeries and multiple rounds of aggressive chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The feeling of isolation takes its toll.

Being stuck in a hospital room was extremely difficult and overwhelmingly isolating. Dominic missed his family, friends and teachers.

The family of six - including Dominic's two sisters and new baby brother Zach hadn't lived in their home under the same roof for over a year.

Touched by their story, Variety wanted to do everything we could to help Dominic get home.

Dominic needed multiple items - from a medical grade hospital bed to bathroom aids and equipment - so his parents turned to Variety, applying for a **\$20,000** grant to support Dominic's transition home.

After a long year of treatment, surgeries, appointments and tests, Dominic finally returned home.

Thanks to our generous supporters, Variety funded a new bed designed to reduce pressure on Dominic's spine, lightweight wheelchair and equipment to help him with basic tasks such as going to the bathroom and showering. We wanted Dominic to be as comfortable as possible.

“We didn't know where to start to apply for funding and we are so grateful that Variety has been able to help. It's made a big difference in our lives.”

Thou, Dominic's Mum.



“You have been able to support Dominic where we could not. You have given him the equipment he needs to live a full life.”

Thou, Dominic's Mum.

Our Grants & Scholarships

Our Grants

Our grants program gives practical help to kids and their families, when they need it most.

In the past year, we have awarded **187** grants worth **\$423,376** for medical and mobility equipment, therapy, communication devices and learning aids, as well as transport. These often small, but essential items, can change the outlook of a child's life.

Meet Swae and Bree

A Variety grant gave sisters Swae and Bree the best Christmas they've had in years, all thanks to you.



The girls are both autistic and need a number of essential items to help regulate their emotions and create a calm, quiet environment. The family was accessing **Variety's Financial Counselling Program** when our counsellors heard they had these vital and precious items stolen from the family car during a period of homelessness.

Close to Christmas, the girls received a sensory pod and new noise-cancelling headphones to help them before and during specialist appointments.

The girls were also gifted brand-new bikes as part of the **Variety Bikes for Kids** program, giving them the freedom, joy and independence of owning their very own bike!

Parents Elvina and Ricky continue to access **Variety's Financial Counselling Program** to gain the financial knowledge and skills they need to get them back on their feet and set them up for a future of financial security.

Thanks to you:

\$423,376

provided in grants to help
Queensland kids

187

kids received
grants this year



26

Variety Heart Scholarships awarded



\$121,000

in **scholarship** support
for talented kids

Our Scholarships

Our scholarship program supports kids to pursue their dreams in sport, education and the arts.

These scholarships are often life-changing and offer much-needed funding for kids hoping to see where their talent can take them in life.

In the past year, we have awarded **26** scholarships worth **\$121,000** for special talents including wheelchair sports, singing and playing musical instruments.

“Gifting the girls noise-cancelling headphones and brand new bikes gave them so much freedom and joy. We can't thank you enough.”

Elvina, Swae and Bree's Mum

Meet Tara

Young Tara is well on track to compete in a future Paralympic Games in swimming, her favourite sport.

Tara has achondroplasia, a form of dwarfism, and a repaired atrioventricular septal defect (AVSD). But she hasn't let that stop her.

She is the recipient of one of our **Variety Heart Scholarships** to help her pursue her dream of being a competitive swimmer. And she is smashing her goals, one swim meet at a time.

Tara received a gold medal in all three Swimming Queensland Sprint Championships events that she qualified for - 50m Freestyle, 50m Breaststroke and 50m Backstroke. She also broke her own Queensland record for the 50m Backstroke. What an achievement!

This year Tara also competed in the School Sport District and Queensland Regional Championships, taking out multiple events and qualifying for the national championships in five of her six events.

As Tara continues to create magic moments and train hard for the national championships, we wish her luck in her swimming endeavours! After meeting one of her heroes and holding a real Paralympic gold medal, Tara is more determined than ever, saying to her mum, "I want one of those."



Our Programs

Did you know?

Variety offers competitive scholarships, up to **\$5,000** per child per year, to support talented kids living with a disability, chronic illness, financial hardship or geographic isolation.

This can help cover expenses like training, competition entry, lessons, supplies, uniforms, travel and competition accommodation.

Our Programs

Our programs are educational and inclusive and help kids to shine.

Some of our most popular programs are the **Variety Braille Music Camp**, **Variety Kids Choir** and the **Variety Activate Inclusion Sports Days**, where kids living with a disability are introduced to the fun and benefits of sport in a safe and inclusive environment.

In the past year, we have delivered **\$948,210** in program impact to **6,425** children through the **Variety Kids Choir**, **Variety Activate Inclusion Sports Days**, **Variety Braille Music Camp**, **Just Like You**, **Variety Kids Sports Camp**, **Financial Literacy and Financial Counselling**.

Meet Tomika

In March 2021 Tomika was out kayaking with her friends when she quickly began to lose movement on both sides of her body.

After months of symptoms and hospital trips, she was diagnosed with a rare disorder called Transverse myelitis. Transverse myelitis is an inflammatory disorder of the spinal cord, leading to loss of muscle power, sensory symptoms (pins and needles) and bladder and bowel dysfunction.

Even standing up or walking a few steps without assistance became extremely difficult.

Since her diagnosis, Tomika needs one-on-one assistance at all times. She is unable to self-propel a wheelchair due to the loss of function of her right arm and hand.

Tomika had been given a manual chair through the NDIS, but was not approved for a power wheelchair.

The manual wheelchair provided does not allow Tomika to participate in any activities independently. Living in Far North Queensland without many public transport options, Tomika was becoming isolated from her friends and community.

Thanks to your support, Variety was able to provide Tomika with a grant for the electric wheelchair she needed. This vital piece of equipment has given Tomika independence, confidence and freedom and has significantly improved her quality of life.

Thanks to you:

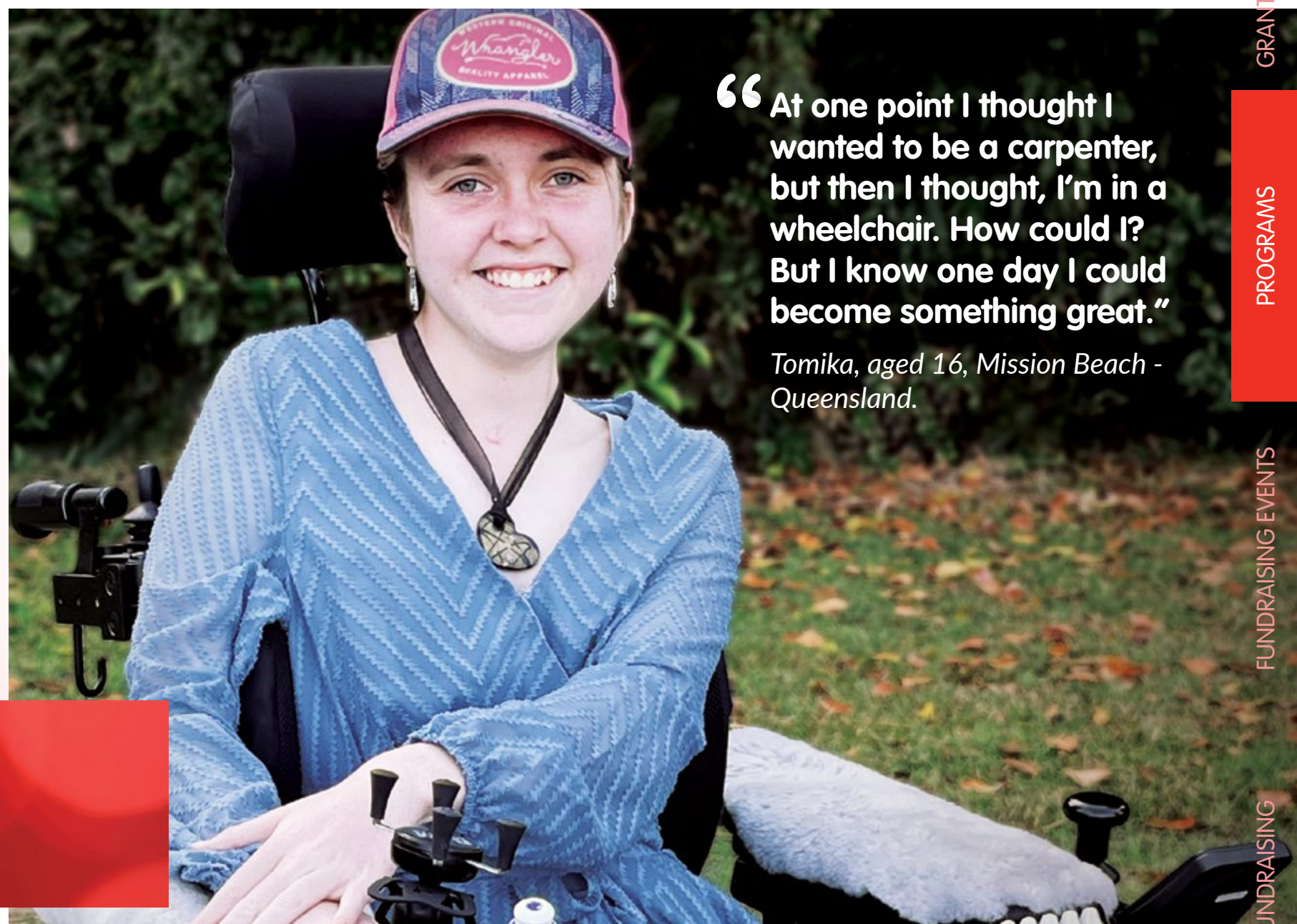
6,425

kids and families supported



\$948,210

in **program impact** across Queensland



“At one point I thought I wanted to be a carpenter, but then I thought, I’m in a wheelchair. How could I? But I know one day I could become something great.”

Tomika, aged 16, Mission Beach - Queensland.

Financial Literacy

An essential life skill for all.

Our **Financial Literacy** program trial has had an incredible impact this year, delivering real-life money skills to five Special Schools across Queensland.

Sadly there are 'vultures waiting at the gate' when a vulnerable child becomes legally entitled to make their own financial decisions. Kids living with a disability are at high risk of being targeted by financial scams once they leave school and turn eighteen.

But through our **Financial Literacy** program, these kids learn important skills aligned with their learning capacity including:

- The value of items such as an apple versus a car.
- How to create and stick to a budget.
- How to manage bills.
- How to make informed financial decisions.
- How to understand their financial rights.

Our goal is to equip kids with the knowledge and skills they need, within their capacity, to make informed financial decisions that will set them up for a healthy financial future and ensure they don't end up in a cycle of poverty.

The program was launched last year and continues to expand its positive impact. Kids in the program say they're more confident when navigating day-to-day tasks like buying groceries and making decisions about their purchases. In the long run, the program will empower them to live more independently and provide pathways to employment as they become young adults.

Did you know?

Variety also launched **Money Buddy** last year - a financial helpline service that kids can call to speak with a Variety Financial Counsellor within minutes. In difficult situations - such as being pressured to sign up for a credit card, or being scammed by a fraudulent company or person or even making a big purchase - a Variety Financial Counsellor can be right there on the other end of the phone to help them make the best decision. This is a vital service that is already helping so many kids who need it!

What's next?

In 2023, our **Financial Literacy** program has expanded to **13** Queensland Special Schools, with more coming on board each term, to make an even greater impact in the lives of kids living with a disability.



Meet the Ogden family

For Hervey Bay parents Jasmine and Robert, the start of the school year is clouded with worry about affording the essentials.

Across Australia, families like the Ogdens who are surviving on just one income, are struggling.

They hoped for a better life.

While Jasmine looks after their two youngest children at home, Robert is in his final year of study to become a qualified mechanic.

Three years ago, the couple decided to sacrifice a higher family income in the short term so Robert could do his apprenticeship. They hoped for long-term financial benefits and employment opportunities.

It's times of the year that should be joyful - like Christmas and birthdays - when the family feels the most strain.

But last Christmas brought a lot of joy. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Variety was able to give all six children their own present to open up on Christmas morning.

Giving couples like Jasmine and Robert the knowledge and skills to get back on their feet financially is something Variety provides through our new **Financial Counselling for Families** program.



Asking for help is not always easy.

When their youngest child, Octavia, was born prematurely last year Jasmine knew their family needed support. That's when she made the call to Variety.

"When I called Variety, they were so warm and welcoming."

Jasmine and Robert first wanted support in getting their kids set up for school through the **Variety EduKids** program. But when we told them about our new, free **Financial Counselling for Families** program, they took up the opportunity.

We set them up with a Variety Financial Counsellor who walked them through how to manage their household budget and help them alleviate some financial stress.



Thanks to you, the Ogden family received a number of essential items to help their kids back to school, including new uniforms, school shoes, school books and a laptop for their eldest son, Levi.

They loved that they didn't have to wear used clothes to school as they had in the past and couldn't wait to start the school year.

"The gifts were such a surprise! To see the kid's eyes light up. We were so grateful to have something special for each of them on Christmas Day."

Jasmine, Mum of six.



Because of you...

The Ogden family has received:

- Financial counselling and support for parents Jasmine and Robert.
- Back-to-school support with new uniforms, books, shoes, bags and lunchboxes.
- Laptop for their eldest son, Levi.
- Christmas presents for each child.



“The Variety team made me feel like asking for help wasn’t a burden or a hassle because I can’t provide something for my family. I couldn’t be more grateful for everything they have done for us.”

Jasmine, Mum of six.

Fundraising Events

Fundraising Events

Coming out of the pandemic and its aftermath, our hallmark fundraising events - including Queensland's longest-running iconic charity motoring event, the Variety Bash - were our most successful yet.

Variety hosts a number of major events throughout the year.

As well as helping children and their families, events are a wonderful opportunity to connect with other Variety supporters and experience what it means to be part of the 'Variety Family'.

Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers, fundraisers and donors who made our bold fundraising goals possible.

Let us tell you a story...

The sun was rising one cool morning on the 2022 Variety Bash.

Bashers were lining up for breakfast, ready to hit the road for one more day bashing through the dusty Queensland outback.

There was a hush in the air... the whispers grew, Bashers and locals started to gather.

78 kids at the local school waited in anticipation...

The doors opened and out walked our Bash Newbies with **78** brand new bikes for the kids of Tambo. One for each kid in the school.

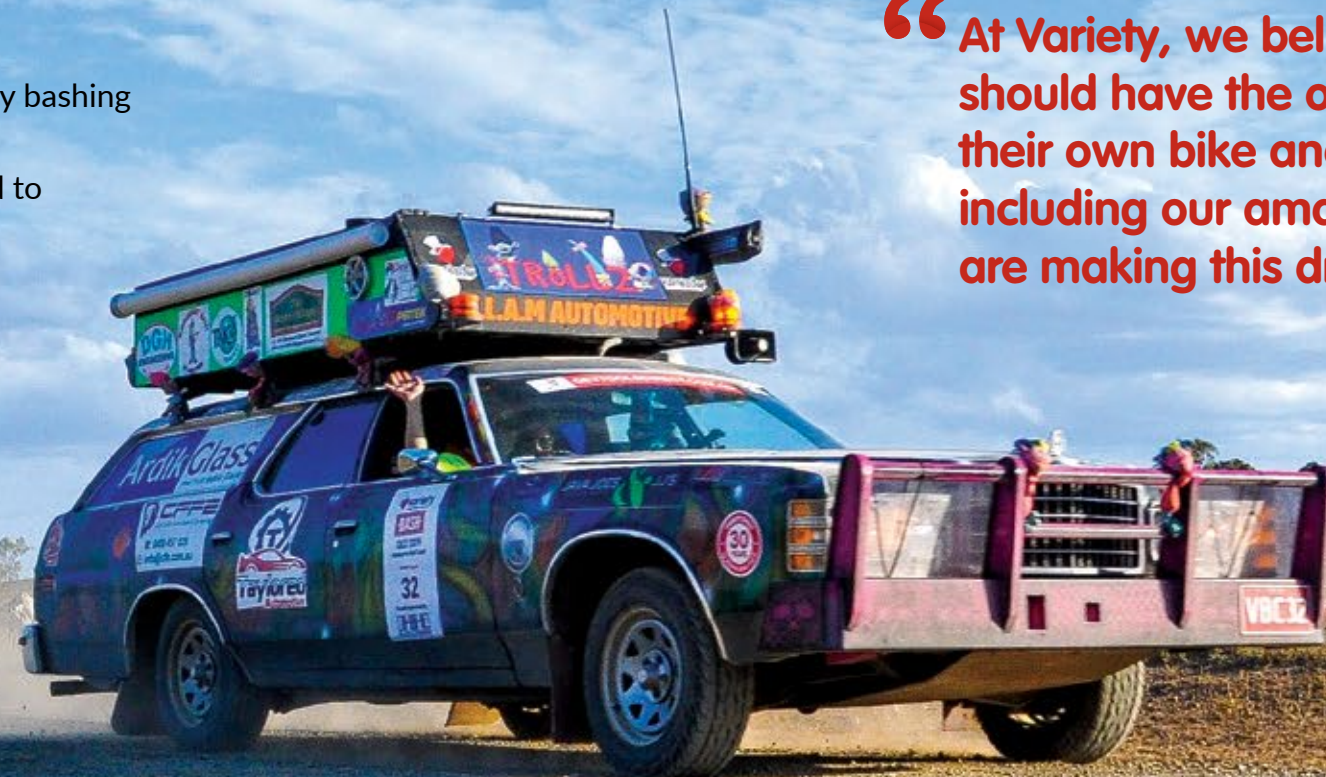
Disadvantaged by their distance, these kids don't have access to the same opportunities and support as other kids.

Some of these kids had never owned a bike before, others had bikes that were too old or too small for them. There wasn't even a place to buy a bike in town.

It's just one of the many ways we are able to give back to the kids in these areas, kids who often miss out just because of their geography.

The looks on the kids faces that day is a memory they will cherish for the rest of their lives, and we are proud to have been a part of that.

“At Variety, we believe that every kid should have the opportunity to own their own bike and our fundraisers, including our amazing Variety Bashers, are making this dream a reality!”



Thank you

Thank you to our incredible **Yamaha Variety Jet Trekkers**, **Variety Bash** and **Variety 4WD Adventure** participants for your continued support.

Meet Miller

Three year old Miller is cheeky and driven, and he lives with an undiagnosable medical condition.



Miller was an engaging and social baby who loved attention, but his parents Natasha and Cameron knew something wasn't quite right. Miller has two older brothers, Wilbur and Victor, who had both reached their developmental milestones.

By nine months old Miller hadn't started to roll over, so he began intensive mobility therapy.

The search for answers.

At 18 months old, Miller underwent genetic testing and was diagnosed with global development delay, hypotonia and dyskinetic movement disorder. But there was one diagnosis that was inconclusive.

He has an abnormal Spermatogenesis Associated 5 gene that is linked to life-long conditions including neurodevelopmental disorder with hearing loss and seizures.

Because the gene is of an unknown variance, his doctors are unable to make a definitive diagnosis.

Marching forward, despite the odds.

Now three, most weeks Miller spends four to five hours in therapy or specialist appointments. The long-term goal is to improve his mobility, but it's a long road ahead.

“Miller's dream is to be able to play and keep up with his older brothers.”

Natasha, Miller's Mum.



Miller loves any therapy that involves walking but the frame provided by the NDIS wasn't designed for outdoor use. Outside, the wheels would seize and put him in danger of toppling on grass and uneven surfaces.

During physical therapy one day Miller tried using a Race Runner - a frame that can be used outdoors on a range of surfaces. The more Miller used it, the more progress he made in his gait and mobility. His parents were determined to buy him one.

But Race Runners are a **\$5,500** investment, which is significant for any family and NDIS would not provide this piece of equipment. So Miller's parents applied for funding through Variety, hoping Miller's wish could come true.

Since being granted his very own Race Runner, Miller's life has changed completely. He is unstoppable!



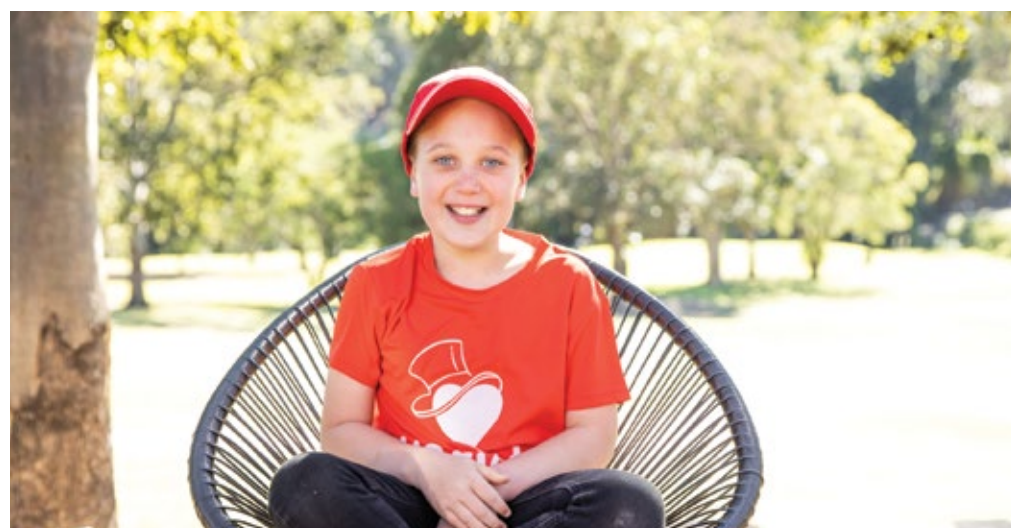
“I was so emotional for Miller, getting something that he will use so much. It has given him a better quality of life, doing something that he loves.”
Natasha, Miller's Mum.



Community Fundraising

Our community fundraisers are the heart of Variety.

They selflessly get out there in the community, year after year, to raise money and awareness of Variety in their local communities. From chopping their hair to sausage sizzles and raffles, their efforts have made a big impact.



We've been able to make the greatest impact on kids in need thanks to our incredible community fundraisers.



YOUR IMPACT

GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

PROGRAMS

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

FUNDRAISING

Sophie's chop for kids in need

Sophie raised an incredible **\$3,601** for kids in need.

Recently, Sophie chopped off and donated her hair to Variety's **Hair with Heart** program.

With the help of F45 Training Coorparoo, Sophie got sweaty with her fundraising and hosted a big fitness session as part of her fundraising efforts.

Sophie's fundraising will make such a difference to children in need by providing wigs to kids who have lost their hair due to a long-term medical condition.

Thanks Sophie. You are one of many amazing community fundraisers that so selflessly supported Variety this year.



Our Supporters

Thankyou to our supporters



Thankyou to our supporters



Department of Social Services

Griffith Corporation

NetEffects

Reegan Pellowe

Supercheap Auto

Village RoadShow

William Angliss Charitable Trust

Gladstone Ports Corporation

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Perpetual

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Grill'd

Local Hire

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Turtle Nursery and
Landscape Supplies

Blue Dog Training



Thank you



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