



# 10 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE BY COUNTRY HOPE

Advertising feature

## Bank commits to giving

WAGGA Mutual, now trading as Beyond Bank Australia, has enjoyed a strong community partnership with Country Hope for more than 10 years.

We are pleased to celebrate Country Hope's 10-year anniversary and the completion of the renovations to their Family Support Centre.

Back in 2011 we launched the Regional Foundation Fund and announced Country Hope as the first Foundation Grant recipient in the Wagga region.

The \$25,000 Foundation Grant was presented by Chief Executive Officer, Robert Keogh to Country Hope to assist with the addition of a Family Room at their Family Support Centre.

The Family Room will be known as the Beyond Bank Australia Family Room and will create a warm and welcoming environment where families feel comfortable to come for friendship and understanding, and have the ability to take time out from the realities of their treatments or health conditions.

Beyond Bank Australia congratulates Country Hope on their 10-year anniversary, and are proud to be a long term partner of such a worthwhile organisation.

We would also like to congratulate the team of dedicated volunteers who help Country Hope, and provide the valuable support service throughout the Wagga region.

# A decade of support, Country Hope grows

COUNTRY Hope is a country-based, family support organisation that supports children diagnosed with cancer and other life threatening illness, and their families in Southern NSW and North Eastern Victoria.

Country Hope was established in 2003, by a group of local business people who were concerned that funds raised for the assistance of local families was not staying in the region, but was being used to fund city-based operations.

Our organisation does not receive any government funding assistance, and relies solely on sponsorship, donations and fundraising efforts of the local communities and grants from philanthropic organisations.

In 2012 our income sources were as follows.

Donations .....	71%
Fundraising .....	22%
Sponsorship .....	6%
Philanthropic .....	1%

Country Hope currently supports 150 families of children diagnosed with cancer and other life threatening illness in the Southern NSW and North Eastern Victoria regions (Wagga, Albury/Wodonga, Griffith and surrounding areas). The experience of childhood illness has a devastating impact on the entire family unit.

The trauma, isolation, times of separation and lack of access to resources impacts heavily on the family's ability to cope through the crisis.

Through offering our programs, including an annual camp to our local families, we address the need for ongoing support and social connection with others that have had a similar experience.

These important connections are considered crucial in greatly improving



the response to treatment, and the ability to recover from the life threatening illness. It is also considered a key element in improving the quality of life, decreasing stress, anxiety, supporting emotional recovery, as well as coping with the loss of a child/sibling, and reducing the overall long term effect of childhood illness.

Our programs also aim to reduce the financial and emotional devastation, and the incidence of family breakdown associated with caring for a child diagnosed with cancer or other life threatening illness.

What we provide:

- Positive support programs for diagnosed children and siblings to assist in reducing stress and maximise the benefits of medical care.
- Financial and emotional support for families, including grief and bereavement support, through our trained welfare officers.
- Training and support for carers and volunteers.

Our goals:

- Reduce the stresses that surround a family with a child diagnosed with cancer or other life threatening illness, by extending a caring hand of assistance, both financially and through family welfare assistance.
- Provide community education about the impacts of childhood cancer and other life threatening illness.
- Operate a low overhead organisation that ensures appropriate allocation of funds to families.
- That all funding raised goes towards the support of families in Southern NSW and North Eastern Victoria.

What our funds are used for?

Our funds are used to provide our families with the costs of their travelling expenses, to and from major city hospital visits, as well as accommodation and living expenses while the child is under hospital treatment.

We also provide assistance to our families for their day to day living costs, such as rates, electricity, telephone, motor vehicle registration and running costs, etc. Each year we provide our patient children and their brothers and sisters with a week's camp.

This camp is totally supervised by medical staff including doctors and nurses, as well as each child has a personal carer.

This camp allows the parents to have a weeks respite from their children, knowing that all medical treatment and supervision that is required will be provided. We are also planning to establish an education fund, which will allow us to provide funding to patient parents to engage tutors for their children, in order that they can re establish their education levels.



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## Lending a hand in hard times

SINCE our beginnings in 2003, Country Hope has grown at a rapid rate, due to a large increase in local families who have a child who has been diagnosed with a life threatening illness.

Through these 10 years, Country Hope has assisted over 150 families in the Riverina Murray Region and North Eastern Victoria.

The demand for Country Hope assistance continues to grow, with an additional 14 local families seeking assistance so far this year.

As a "Not-for-Profit" Charity, Country Hope relies on fundraising through volunteers, sponsorships and donations to be able to continue to provide our families with the assistance they require, we do not receive any government funding.

Country Hope also offers the children of its families the opportunity to attend an annual "Time out for Life" camp where the children and their brothers and sisters are provided with a fun filled week of respite and enjoyment.

A fully funded holiday, under total medical and carer supervision, where the children can take time out from the reality of their treatment, and hospitalisation related to their medical condition. The children are provided with valuable life skills, with many of our client children becoming mentors and carers later in their life.

This event also provides the parents with the respite they need after long periods spent



in hospital whilst their child is undergoing treatment.

This event, which will be held in late September this year will be held at "Birrigai" Tidbinbilla in the ACT.

There will be approximately 80 children and a further 100 carers, medical and administration staff attending.

The cost of this travel, meals and accommodation for this event will be in excess of \$80,000. Thanks to a generous sponsorship of the Wagga Amateur Picnic Race

Club committee, a portion of this cost is covered.

In the past 10 years, since its establishment, Country Hope has provided in excess of \$2 million in family assistance and with the constant growth in demand for assistance; there will be a need to continue to raise additional funds.

A recent joint venture between Coles Ltd. and Country Hope, is providing the opportunity for the raising of additional funds required to

support our families.

The board of Directors of Country Hope would like to express their sincere thanks to the large number of sponsors, volunteers, businesses and tradespeople who have kindly donated their time, skills and finance, in order that Country Hope can continue its much needed family assistance, and have provided the organisation with a newly renovated family support centre at 25 Blake Street, Wagga.



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## Coles cooking up a storm

COLES is proud to announce its involvement with the Henty Machinery Field Days to help raise funds for not-for-profit organisation, Country Hope.

From September 17 to 19, Coles will be cooking up a barbeque feast at the Farm Gate Produce area, with all proceeds going towards local charity, Country Hope.

Country Hope, based in Wagga, is dedicated to supporting the families of children with life threatening illnesses, and currently supports over 140 local families.

Chris Blake, manager at Country Hope, said that without the help of Coles and other benefactors Country Hope would not be able to provide financial support for families.

"Country Hope is a not for profit organisation and therefore relies solely on fundraising opportunities to allow us to continue supporting farming families. The Henty Field Days barbeque with Coles is a marvellous way for us to raise much needed funds for these sick children and their families."

Coles Centro Wodonga store manager, Andrew McGrath, said that the Henty Machinery Field Days presents a great opportunity for local farmers to exhibit their products to a variety of people. "With the Henty Field Days attracting in excess of 800 exhibitors and 60,000 people across the three day event, it provides a fantastic opportunity for regional farmers to develop their businesses and showcase their products to thousands of people, and we're sure this year will see record numbers of visitors to the region to celebrate the Field Days' 50th anniversary," Andrew said.

# Education fund to help fast-track recovery

COUNTRY Hope has a number of client children who spend extended periods of time, (up to 7 years) having intense medical treatment for life threatening illnesses in hospitals in major cities or away from their place of residence.

As a result of these extended stays, and because of the intensity of the treatment, their education standards fall to alarming low levels.

They are unable to participate in distance education, due to being too ill to be educated.

They are also not eligible for assistance under the NSW Department of Education Disability Education Program, as they do not meet the guidelines of being disabled.

Once a child reaches 15 or 16, and he or she has been, or is still receiving away from home treatment, often for many years, they face the fact of being "long-term unemployed", and need assistance with vocational guidance in order that a career training path can be established for them.

Country Hope is trying to establish an Education and Vocation Fund, which could provide finance to client families in order that they can employ tutors to assist with "one-to-one" education for the child. It would also enable families with older children to seek assistance from vocational guidance councillors in order that a career guideline can be mapped out for the older child.

We are currently seeking seed funding to establish the fund.

Country Hope has approached Dr. Tamara Jones-Hood at Academic



Educational Services, who currently carries out this form of tutoring for children who are suffering from education level drop, resulting from long term medical treatment, and she has offer to assist with the program, if it can be established.

It is proposed that the child program would work as follows.

■ Establish a listing of qualified tutors in various subjects.

- Initial interview with child, parents and tutor consultant to establish education needs.
- Education consultant to set up child education progress file detailing agreed needs of each child
- Tutor consultant to discuss each case with best suited tutor in each subject.
- Tutoring to being with a detailed record kept of

## Testimonial

**A PARENT'S worst nightmare came true on December 2007 our 3½ year old girl Rosey was diagnosed with Leukaemia.**

**Our world and family fell apart. My husband Matt, Rosey, our 8 week old baby and myself drove to Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. We had to leave behind the twins 10 years old, Sammy 2 years old and Jessy 1 year old with family. We started Rosey's battle with cancer by living in Melbourne for 6 weeks, she underwent unimaginable pain of needles, yucky medicines forced down her throat, transfusions, lumbar punctures until she had no more veins to access then they put a porta Cath inside her to stick in the chemo needles.... When we finally drove back to Wodonga, emotionally destroyed, a social worker from the Albury hospital put us in contact with Country Hope, this was the best help we could have had.**


**Country Hope helped our family out financially with petrol vouchers for the weekly travels to Melbourne for treatment.**

**Thank you Country Hope for all you have done for our family.**

**- Elarue Family**

child's progress.  
■ Quarterly meeting held with child, parents, tutor consultant and tutor.  
With the older children, it is proposed to involve one of the qualified training companies to work with parents and older child, to do an interview and a vocation review, in order that a possible career training program could be established.

**Proud to be associated with Country Hope**



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