



THE GIRLS & BOYS  
BRIGADE

# Stories from the GBB

**AUTUMN EDITION 2024**



## From Trivia Night to Treetop Adventures

Through busy seasons like this one, I am deeply grateful for the supporters who make our work possible!

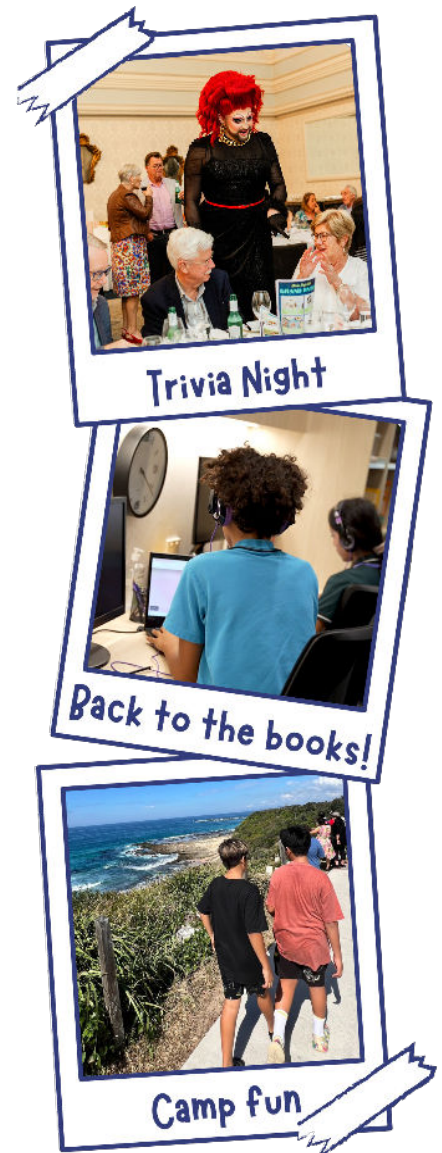
Last month, our annual Trivia Night Fundraiser took place. It was a fantastic and spirited evening, with an abundance of delicious food, ambience, and laughter. Thanks to our guests, volunteers, donors, and support from our staff and board, the event raised an incredible \$81,000 of essential funds.

The very next day, several GBB staff embarked on the first camp of the year with 12 excited 7 and 8-year-olds in tow! Their journey took them to the Central Coast, a perfect backdrop for "the best camp ever," as one of the children called it. I hope you'll enjoy reading about their treetop adventure on page 3.

The school year is progressing quickly, and so are the young people! With just one term complete, many of them are making great strides already on their reading and academic goals, as well as their passions outside of school. Our last family dinner featured a singing performance by a recently graduated youth. Seeing her confidence and talent was a powerful reminder of the importance and impact of your support.

Thank you so much for your generosity in helping young people reach their full potential. I look forward to seeing what else we can achieve together!

Stefan Lamour-Jansson  
Executive Officer



# Walking the path of support

## Ava and Samara's Road to Resilience with the GBB

The road of support can be long and winding, but it is also incredibly rewarding!

Ava and her mother Samara first came to The Girls & Boys Brigade in 2016 while experiencing domestic violence. They found support to escape this situation, but healing from the emotional and financial distress is an ongoing journey. Thankfully, they don't have to go through it alone.

Over the years, the programs team at the GBB have worked together to holistically support Ava and Samara according to their needs. For Ava, this includes being embraced in our Children's Program and now our Youth Program. Ava has mental health challenges and a mild intellectual disability which impacts her socially and academically.



The Girls & Boys Brigade has provided a safe place for her to receive support in these areas. She has been able to attend exciting camps, get help with her homework, and participate in fun activities during school holidays. She has found good friends and mentors in the GBB staff, who fully accept and encourage her. Recently, she has started guitar lessons, and has been growing confidence in her talent for singing. It has been amazing to watch her develop her interests!

Samara has also received support from the GBB by way of family support counselling, case management, and advocacy. She has found community within family dinners and parenting courses offered at the GBB, which have helped her learn how to best support Samara based on her needs. Family Support Officer Stephanie has worked tirelessly to collaborate with Ava's specialists and NDIS provider to ensure she is getting the most out of her NDIS package and create a holistic plan that will support their family best.

Ava and Samara's story is still being written, but we are incredibly happy to see them progress so much from the wraparound support and community belonging they've found at the GBB, all because of generous supporters like you.

**CAMP**  
in #s



**250** kilometres  
travelled  
in the GBB Bus

**20**

**crabs collected  
and released**

into special  
crab habitats  
at Tuggerah  
Lake





## Rising to the challenge

### Children lead staff in conquering fears on camp

The programs team at the GBB help motivate, encourage, and provide opportunities for young people to try new things outside of their comfort zone. But on a recent camp, these roles reversed as the children cheered on staff when their nerves reached new heights!

Treetops Adventure in the Ourimbah State Forest features aerial challenges to test even the bravest of adventurers. Participants must travel from tree to tree by climbing across webs of rope, crossing wobbly timber platforms, and sliding along ziplines suspended 5-20 metres above the forest floor. It is not for the faint of heart or the scared of heights!

Miss Mel and Miss Hannah had been planning to cheer the children on from the ground, but an unexpected turn of events required them to participate in the activity at a much higher altitude. Despite their fear, they would need to join the children as they travelled between the treetops.

“There were lots of words of encouragement from the children. I don’t think we could have done it without them.” said Mel.

Mel and Hannah were shocked to discover that, despite their own fear, some of the children they had been concerned about due to them lacking confidence or being a bit wobbly on their feet were easily striding from tree to tree.

Mel contacted the carer of one of these children following the activity, who said, “I just can’t thank you enough.” As this carer is aged and faces their own physical challenges, they would not have been able to accompany the child on an activity such as this one.

The challenge was a great reminder of what young people are capable of when they are empowered with opportunities to lead, navigate difficulties, and step outside of their comfort zone. Thank you for helping provide these opportunities for kids in need!



13

**Pies eaten**  
at Pie in the Sky  
en route to camp

14

**pelicans spotted**



100s

**of memories made**

# Physiotherapist, Dad, and GBB Volunteer

James Sutherland is an athlete, sports physiotherapist, committed husband and father, and loyal follower of the Richmond Tigers. Despite juggling these roles, he prioritises giving back to his community.

Once or twice a week, James can be found reading with children, cooking dinner with the youth, or kicking a ball around in the basement at The Girls & Boys Brigade. His commitment leaves a significant impact, not only on the young people but also on himself.

“I simply wanted to use my knowledge and skills to help kids however I could. I really enjoy introducing them to new ideas and experiences which all kids should get exposed to as they grow up,” said James.

The young people quickly embraced James as part of the GBB family. He’s a patient homework helper, helpful coach (and fierce competitor) when it comes to athletics, and an excellent mentor. Whether it’s helping a child perfect their basketball layup or learning to cook an Indonesian dish from a youth, James cherishes every moment of his volunteer work.

“No matter where you are in life, there is always someone better and someone worse off than you. I just really enjoy using the lessons I’ve learned along the way to make life better for a child, who, through no fault of their own, simply may not get the same opportunities I had as a child.”

Thanks to people like you and James, young people at The Girls & Boys Brigade can access support, opportunities, mentors, and memories that help prepare them for a brighter future.



Save the Date!

## Alumni Evening

Thursday June 20 | 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Did you previously attend The Girls & Boys Brigade on Riley Street? If so, please join us for a special alumni event! Come tour the updated building and share your memories. Canapés and drinks will be served. The event is open to all GBB alumni at no cost.

Please RSVP to  
[friends@girlsandboysbrigade.com.au](mailto:friends@girlsandboysbrigade.com.au)

Find us on Facebook @TheGirlsBoysBrigadeSyd and Instagram @GirlsAndBoysBrigadeSyd

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