



# Annual Report

2022

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Every child deserves to  
**thrive.**

## Mission

To empower children and young people to make safer and healthier choices through education

## Vision

Generations of healthy young Australians living to their full potential



# HEALTHY HAROLD IS ON THE MOVE



Empowering children through education



## Who we are

For over 40 years, Life Ed NSW/ACT has been at the forefront of preventative health and wellbeing education for our children and young people.

We make a difference by delivering evidence-backed, engaging education to children in their formative years, to build the skills, values and attitudes that enable them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives.

Together with schools, we teach children and young people aged 3-17 the strategies to navigate a range of key issues that help improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

# Our Core Pillars



### Physical health

Prevent obesity; prevent harm from drugs, including much needed support on vaping



### Social & emotional wellbeing

Prevent bullying and violence through respectful relationships; build resilience and mental wellbeing



### Personal safety

Prevent drug and alcohol-related harm. Prevent other harms (online and face to face) through protective behaviours



# Chair's Message

Our vision of a world where children and young people are empowered to lead healthy and safe lives has been more important than ever as we have confronted the impact of the pandemic on school communities.

Students and parents have had to navigate disruptive educational delivery, and many have found they had significantly undervalued how much they enjoy school life.

Teachers, the backbone of the education system, have been continuously challenged to create safe and effective learning opportunities for their students.

But in the last 12 months, Life Ed has come together as a more unified organisation as we continually adapted to an ever-changing environment. In many instances, staff have changed the way they live and work, creating a more practical living environment. Our programs have adjusted to another 'new normal', as we created new ways to reach students during the time they needed us the most.

Despite the pandemic, we supported over 240,000 children, helping them cope with a variety of challenges and learn the skills to make informed life-changing decisions. We have rapidly expanded our Virtual Classroom Program to ensure we could continue to support children and their communities by providing relevant and topical educational content. The introduction of a third outdoor pop-up classroom enabled us to reach more students in rural and remote areas, so no child must miss out on the opportunity to learn the crucial life skills needed to thrive.

Our dedicated team of 60 specialist Educators have delivered new and dynamic content into our programs, including much needed support on vaping, and a focus on providing students with the tools to understand the importance of respectful relationships, consent and empathy.

Our board is so proud to see everyone in Life Ed continuing to rise to meet the needs of the community and to observe our programs continuing to reach so many young people. I would like to thank our senior leadership, the passionate specialist Educators for their dedication and success in making a positive difference to the lives of so many students despite the challenges.

Especially do I wish to thank my board colleagues' commitment to our goals and values. During the year, we thanked and farewelled two wonderful, committed directors Bill Buckle and Tim James. We are most thankful for their substantial assistance. But we are fortunate to now have three additional directors - Christine Bowen, Karen Gould and Alexandra Hodgkinson. They are playing a valuable part with their diverse experience and skills.

Without the assistance and support of government, corporate and community partners, our staff, our many dedicated volunteers we would be completely lost and my colleagues and I thank you with heartfelt appreciation for your continued support which has ensured children have not missed out on learning the valuable life skills they need, often to survive.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alan Cadman'.

**THE HON ALAN CADMAN, OAM**  
Chairman, Life Ed NSW/ACT

# CEO's Message



It's been a remarkable year for Life Ed NSW/ACT. As I reflect on the past 12 months, I am reminded of how much has changed since 2022 started. The world is still reeling from the pandemic and its aftermath, and our communities have been deeply affected. But as a collective, we've shown incredible resilience and strength in the face of adversity.

Life Ed has always been dedicated to helping children reach their potential, and it's no coincidence that this ideal is deeply aligned with our core strategic values of health, sustainability, and inclusion. As we enter 2023, those values will continue to guide us as we work toward our vision of creating a better future for all children in NSW/ACT.

We are proud of what we've accomplished so far: partnering with over 2,200 schools and early learning centres across NSW/ACT; and continuing to support teachers and early child care specialists in educating our children on improving their outcomes through Life Ed's unique approach to health and wellbeing education.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved with Life Ed during this time, from our teachers who tirelessly work with students every day, to parents who supported their children's development throughout school closures.

I am incredibly proud of the respect, integrity and tenacity our team has demonstrated at every turn. Throughout the year, we expanded and launched new initiatives that will further drive impact to children who participate in the Life Ed program

- We launched a new Early Years Learning Program to empower children aged 3-5 with the skills needed to thrive, at a pivotal time in their development
- With the support of the nib foundation, we introduced critical new education content on the topic of vaping, to support our primary and secondary school communities.
- Thanks to the support of Westpac's Safer Children, Safer Communities program, Life Ed introduced new content into our cyber safety program, bCyberwise, and wellbeing program, Relate, Respect, Connect, to support student safely navigate challenges in an increasingly complex world.

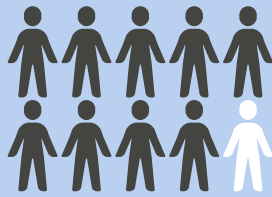
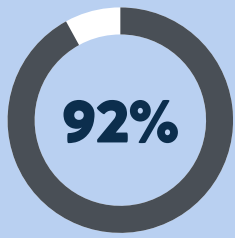
We are proud to have empowered over 240,000 students across NSW and ACT to develop the crucial skills needed to look after their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Thank you for your ongoing support to our organisation. We couldn't reach this many children and young people without you.

**JONATHON PEATFIELD**

Chief Executive Officer, Life Ed NSW/ACT

# Our Impact

In 2022, Life Ed surveyed more than 8,300 students who participated in our modules, to assess the effectiveness of the Life Ed program in improving their health outcomes. Positive results were found both in behavioural change intent and an increase in knowledge awareness:

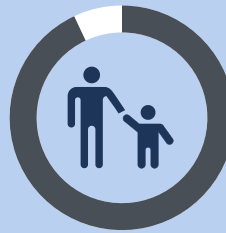


92% of students said they will **make good decisions about alcohol and drugs** after what they have learnt

89% of students said they can **recognise, react and report unsafe or unwanted behaviour**

92% of students said they **know the body clues that can tell them when they are unsafe**

80% of students said they **explain and give examples of consent**



93% of students said they feel like they can say **'no'** if offered a vape or a cigarette

86% of students said they understand the **positive and negative use of online communication**

93% of students said they **always know to check with an adult if they need to use medicine**

95% of students said they **know the effects of alcohol and other drugs on the body**



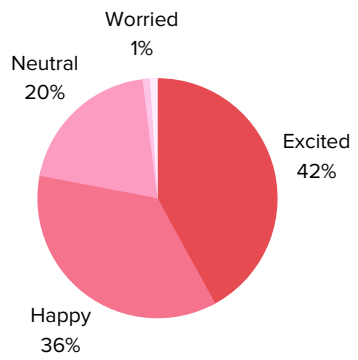


**82%**  
said the Life Ed specialist educator helped make the session interesting

**80%**  
of students said they learned something new during the session

**78%**  
of students said they were either 'excited' or 'happy' with the program

**How students felt about the session:**



"Throughout the years of seeing Healthy Harold, everytime I learn something new and always an interesting subject."

**Year 5 student**

"I love Healthy Harold because we're not just learning, we're having fun. The lessons I learned will help me in situations further on in life"

**Year 4 student**



**WHAT TEACHERS SAY:**

In 2022, 1,821 teachers utilised Life Ed's Teacher Assessment Tool to observe and assess the learning of over 35,000 students during the Life Ed lesson.

**76%**  
Explored concepts through questions

**86%**  
Cooperatively solved problems

**84%**  
Engaged in collaborative learning

**79%**  
Participated in activities that supported and challenged understanding

**65%**  
Explained problems or solutions to peers



## Our Reach



**240,600**

children & young people across NSW & ACT participated in Life Ed programs in 2022



**2,200**

early learning centres, primary & secondary schools visited in 2022

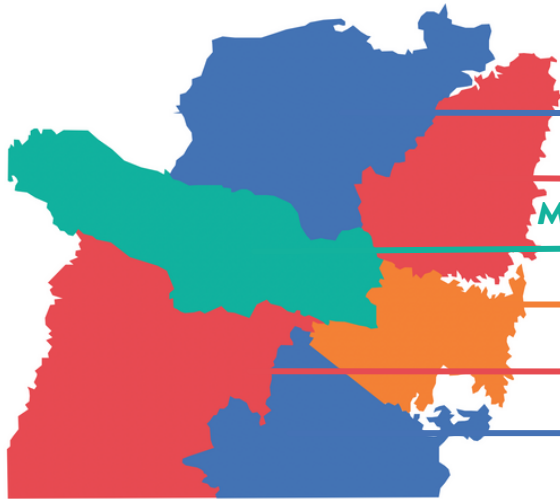
**603**

primary schools reached in low socio-economic areas, many with a fully funded Life Ed visit

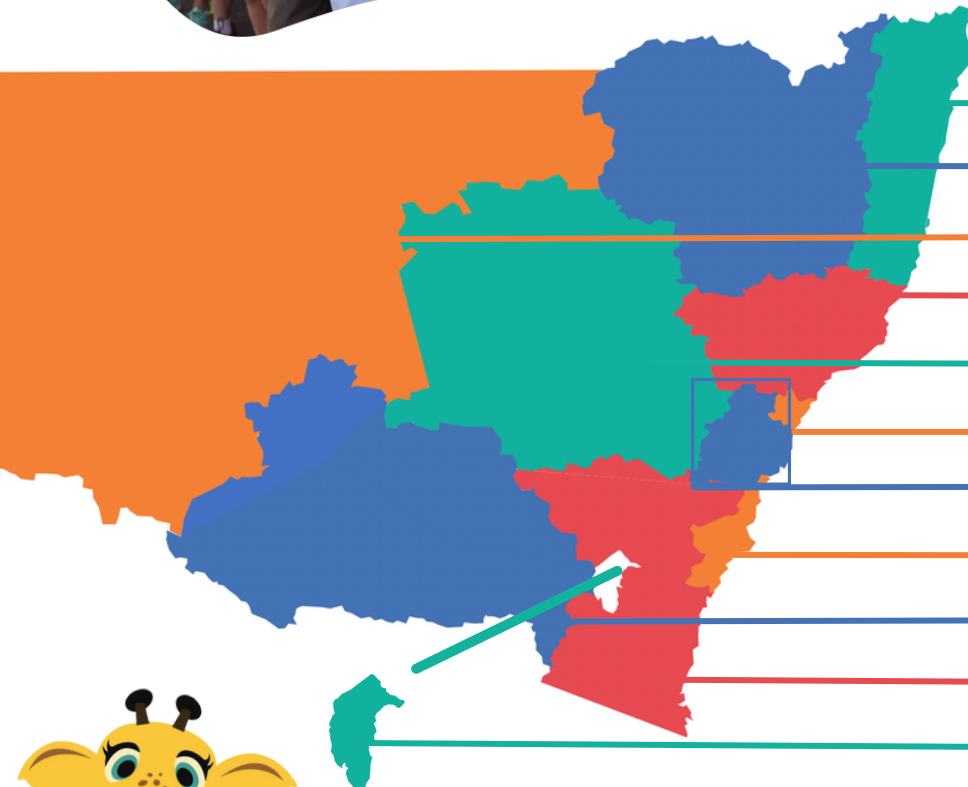
**573**

primary schools visited in regional and remote communities





- Metro North West - 19,350
- Metro North East - 33,150
- Metro West & Blue Mountains - 24,270
- Metro Inner & East - 6,653
- Metro South West - 25,156
- Metro South - 16,484



- North Coast - 11,775
- New England - 6,333
- Far West - 3,685
- Hunter - 23,180
- Central West & Orana - 12,240
- Central Coast - 13,035
- Sydney Metropolitan (see insert)
- Illawarra Shoalhaven - 16,980
- Riverina Murray - 17,771
- South East & Tablelands - 7,271
- Australian Capital Territory - 3,251



# Our Program



## Innovation

Core to the Life Ed program is teaching students the social and emotional skills they need to develop healthy identities and relationships, and make responsible and safe decisions.

Thanks to the support of Westpac's Safer Children, Safer Communities program, Life Ed updated two of our most popular modules, bCyberwise and Relate Respect Connect.

The updated modules place more emphasis on the challenges young people face when connecting with people online, including the risks of coercive and predatory behaviour.

Utilising the 'Recognise, React, Report' model, bCyberwise empowers students to be alert to their own body clues when something is unsafe or 'not right', developing the skills needed to react, (for example, stop, block, ignore) and report or seek help, in an age-appropriate way.

The updated Relate, Respect, Connect module supports students to build positive, safe and respectful relationships face to face and online.





## Early Years Learning Program

In 2022, Life Ed launched a new-look early years learning program designed to empower children aged 3-5 years, with the skills they need to thrive.

The program, led by Life Ed's specialist educators, focuses on promoting a safe and healthy lifestyle through play-based learning experiences that enhance children's mental, physical, and social development.



**26,700**

little learners participated in Life Ed's Early Years Learning Program



**1,050**

preschool and early learning centres visited



# REALITY NOW

Australia's first social norms-based drug and alcohol program for secondary students is busting myths around the prevalence of vape use in young people in a bid to reduce risky behaviour.



More than 6,300 teens across NSW and SA have participated in the updated 'Reality Now' program, conducted by Life Ed with support from nib foundation, which aims to prevent drug and alcohol misuse in young people by correcting misperceptions about the attitudes and behaviours of their peers.

The updated program includes new vaping prevention content to support students to understand and identify the associated harms, provide the opportunity to challenge misinformation, and develop critical thinking and positive decision-making skills.

At the heart of the approach is a live, interactive survey tool which captures students' perceptions of their classmates' behaviours and attitudes about vaping, alcohol and other drugs, as well as their own behaviours and attitudes.

The anonymous survey is completed in-session by students on a digital device, with questions designed to draw comparisons to their results compared to national norms.

**Data from the survey revealed that overwhelmingly, students overestimate their peers use of vapes, alcohol and other drugs.**

When asked to estimate the use of vapes among their peers, the survey of more than 6,300 students from years 7 through to 11 found that students assumed 86% of their peers were vaping at varying levels. However, in reality more than 75% of students said they had never used vapes.

Similarly the survey showed that over 57% of students assumed their peers were smoking combustible cigarettes at varying levels, however only 13% of students reported ever using tobacco.

Around 50% of students thought their peers were using cannabis, when in fact, more than 88% of students said they never used this drug.

When it comes to alcohol use, students believed around one in six of their peers were drinking regularly, much higher than the self-reported rates of 5%.

**"What we can see from this data is that overwhelmingly, young people are making great choices about their health and safety and choosing not to use vapes, tobacco and other drugs."**

Jonathon Peatfield, Life ED NSW/ACT CEO

Despite these promising trends in declining drug and alcohol use, Life Ed NSW/ACT CEO, Jonathon Peatfield warns there is still work to be done,



with vaping a growing concern amongst school communities. Teachers have shared praise on 'Reality Now' for its strengths-based approach in engaging young people, and supporting schools to address trickier content.

"The 'Reality Now' session was very informative and engaging, and the Life Ed specialist educator did a wonderful job. Our students have learned to face the facts about drugs, especially vaping, and how to stand up for their right to say 'no' in any peer-pressured situation. Thank you, it was truly a worthwhile lesson for all of us"

Christine Ha, Teacher - Burwood Girls High School

### **10,150 primary students unpack the facts on vaping with Life Ed**

With the support of nib foundation, Life Ed developed and introduced new vaping education content into our primary program module, On The Case, which focuses on investigating nicotine delivery products and their health and social impacts with students.

In 2022, Life Ed visited more than 490 primary schools to deliver On The Case to Year 5 and 6 students. Facilitated by our specialist educators, the sessions supported students to critically analyse the history and laws around vaping and nicotine products, and how social norms change in line with health research.

# GO BANANAS DAY AT SCHOOL

On October 26th, Healthy Harold and the Life Ed team celebrated Go Bananas Day at school with 14,000 students.

The event, in partnership with Hort Innovation and Australian Bananas, aimed to encourage healthy eating habits and highlight the nutritional benefits of Australian bananas.

Over 175,950 students participated in nutrition-content lessons with Life Ed throughout the year, where they learned about the importance of choosing nutritious foods for health and energy, including bananas which are Healthy Harold's favourite fruit.





AUSTRALIAN  
**BANANAS**  
Make your body sing!

# Our People



## We grew our team

Our 60 dedicated specialist Educators travel to every corner of NSW and ACT, to deliver the Life Ed program in schools and early learning centres. We welcomed 14 talented and experienced new specialist Educators and 3 new administrative staff to the team:

- Tanya Ashby (Customer Service Officer)
- Francois McHardy (Business Manager)
- Fang Xu (Marketing Coordinator)
- Kristy Beaumont (North-West Educator)
- Rebecca Williams (Metro Educator)
- Janaya Graham (Metro Educator)
- Kate Battle (Metro Educator)
- Elizabeth Fuary (Metro Educator)
- Rachel Hadchiti (Metro Educator)
- Ruth Brandes de Roos (Metro Educator)
- Kira Hazel (Northern Educator)
- Joshua Brady (Orana Educator)
- Matthew Williams (Hunter Educator)
- Jessica Laffan (Hunter Early Childhood Educator)
- Haylee Forsyth (ACT Early Childhood Educator)
- Elizabeth Irving (Illawarra Educator)
- Sharon Porcu (Far South Coast-Shoalhaven Educator)

## Happiness survey

Our organisation is committed to continuously improving the employee experience and providing support whenever possible. Life Ed values a healthy and happy work-life balance for everyone. The results from our internal survey showed that the organisation has a happiness score of 8.3/10 among employees over the last 12 months.

## Cultural survey

Life Ed aims to help young Australians reach their full potential. Similarly, it's important our team can reach theirs, and a positive organisational culture is crucial to achieving this goal. Results from our cultural survey showed that most employees feel inspired, supported and motivated in their roles:

### What our team say



Are inspired by the work that Life Ed does



Feel connected to our vision and mission



Believe the organisation shows concern for the wellbeing and safety of its employees



Strongly agree or agree they are satisfied with working at Life Ed







# LEAP

## GOVERNANCE

Life Ed is committed to supporting the learning and professional growth of its team. In 2022, Life Ed developed the Life Ed Action Plan (LEAP) model as a framework to guide the organisation towards having greater impact in schools.

It is widely recognised in the education sector that 'great teachers do not just happen; they are developed and keep on developing throughout their professional lives.' (What Works Best 2020 Update).

LEAP for Effective Teaching and for Professional Development and Assessment were both developed and implemented throughout the second half of 2022.

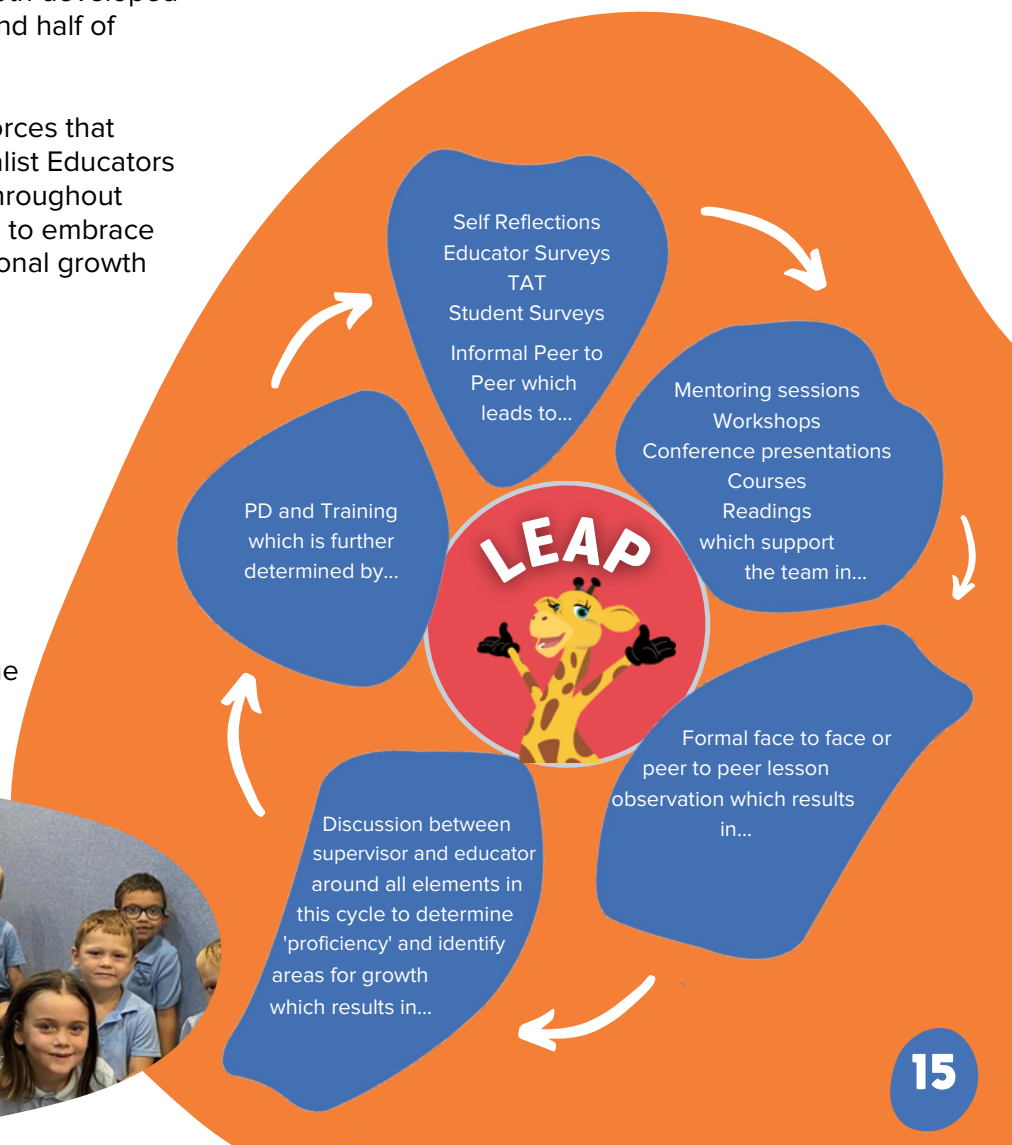
The cyclic nature of both models reinforces that learning and growth is ongoing. Specialist Educators received training in both frameworks throughout 2022 to educate and support the team to embrace this framework as part of their professional growth journey.

In 2023, Life Ed remains committed to further developing each component of both LEAP models to ensure transparency, clearly defined roles and a documented comprehensive understanding of 'how, what and why'.

Careful planning and development alongside effective training will ensure future success in embedding the LEAP framework into the everyday operations of Life Ed.

## Thank you for your contribution

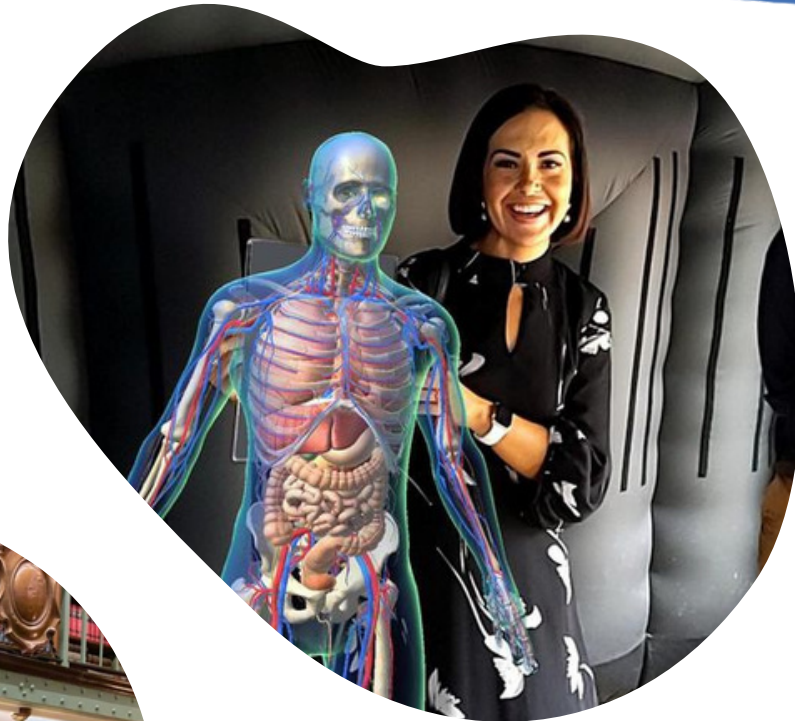
We would like to thank the following 4 specialist Educators for their outstanding service and contribution to Life Ed. We wish Ruth Van der Wegen the best with her future endeavours after 21 years of dedication to this organisation. We also farewell Louise Major (30 years) and Taryn Chandler (20 years) and wish them the best for their retirement.



# Our Ambassadors

It takes a village to raise a child, and all across NSW & ACT local communities are empowering children to strive for healthy futures with Life Ed. Life Ed currently has more than 100 State and Federal Government ambassadors who help us to support our program in their local areas.

Pictured right: The Hon. Prue Car, MP - Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney



Pictured left: The Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC - Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council



**We held our annual Ambassador Reception hosted by the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, and our Chairman, the Hon Alan Cadman OAM, at Parliament House. 40 members joined us to meet Healthy Harold and be updated on new developments at Life Ed NSW/ACT. This event provides a great opportunity to show our immense appreciation and thank our Ambassadors for their ongoing support.**

Pictured left: Mr Gurmesh Singh, MP - Shadow Minister for Tourism, Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, and Shadow Minister for the North Coast





Pictured below: Mr Geoff Provest, MP, Member of the Legislative Assembly

Pictured above: Dr Mike Freeland, MP, Chair of Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport visiting Campbelltown North Public School



Pictured below: Dr Joe McGirr, MP, Member of the Legislative Assembly



Pictured above: Mr Tim James, MP, Shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building visiting Willoughby Public School



# Our Board

The work of Life Ed is supported by the efforts of many dedicated and highly skilled Board Directors who give their time and talents to help grow our organisation, and ensure every child has the opportunity to learn the skills and strategies they need to thrive. In 2022, we welcomed three new members to our Board; Christine Bowen, Karen Gould and Alexandra Hodgkinson.



**The Hon. Alan G Cadman OAM**

The Hon Alan G Cadman OAM served as the Federal Member for Mitchell for 33 years including Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Relations and Small Business and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

A long-term supporter of Life Ed, The Hon Alan G Cadman OAM is a former director of the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce Board and Patron, Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence. He is experienced in station and property management, small business and orcharding.



**Ms Christine Bowen**

Christine is an experienced director and senior executive in financial services. She now runs a boutique consultancy drawing on her 30+ years professional expertise in corporate marketing and investor relations assisting clients to build stronger stakeholder engagement.

Chris' board experience is in the private, superannuation and not-for-profit sectors. Additionally, Chris is currently Chair of the Parents' Association at an independent school and previously served as P&C President at the local primary school.



**Mr Aaron Chen**

Aaron brings governance and financial strength to the Board as a Chartered Accountant and his wealth of corporate experience both in senior risk and commercial roles across diverse sectors, including Professional Services, Property, Construction, Infrastructure, Government, Agriculture and, most recently, Retail/Logistics.

In addition to his professional skills, he brings a passion for ensuring our young people are provided the best opportunity to fulfil their potential.



**Ms Karen Gould**

Karen is a Managing Director of Palisade Investment Partners, an Australian infrastructure investment manager with \$4 billion in funds under management. She has extensive governance experience and is a Non-Executive Director of the Australian Clean Energy Council, Sunshine Coast Airport, Coffs Harbour Airport, Granville Harbour Wind Farm and Ross River Solar Farm.

Karen has a background in finance, policy and law. She was a Senior Vice President with Macquarie Bank in London where she focused on principal investments in renewable energy projects. Prior to this, she was a commercial lawyer with Baker & McKenzie, a senior policymaker and UN climate change negotiator with the Australian Government, and an engineer with CH2M Hill (now Jacobs).



**Ms Alexandra Hodgkinson**

Alexandra is an experienced journalist and television producer and communications executive. A multi-award winner, her experience spans a wide spectrum of programming including short-form documentaries, investigative journalism, entertainment and current affairs on flagship programs Sunday Night and 60 Minutes, where she worked for 16 years.

Alex worked as Executive Media Advisor to the NSW Police Commissioner and executive team, and at the GO Foundation, founded by Sydney Swans legends Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin, providing education, access, and opportunities to young Indigenous Australians.



**Mr Ken Keith OAM**

Ken is currently serving his 15th year as Mayor of the Parkes Shire and 40th year in local government. He has served on numerous committees over the years, including as Chair of the Country Mayor's Assoc. NSW, Melbourne Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance (Inland Rail), Newell Highway Taskforce and Centroc, now the Central NSW Joint Organization. He has been involved in Life Ed since it came to Parkes over 35 years ago. He is currently contributing to the Ministerial Rural Health Advisory Committee.



**Dr Julian de Meyrick**

Julian is a director of two NFPs and has held a number of senior higher education governance positions, including membership of private sector academic boards. He was Dean of Students and a member of Academic Senate at Macquarie University, Director, Higher Education at Sydney Institute of TAFE and the Dean of a private higher education provider. Before the disruption caused by Covid-19, he was also a seasonal lecturer at Macquarie University.

Julian previously worked in marketing management for major local and international organisations, including Unilever, American Express, Bushell's Tea and Coffee, and the Hong Kong Tourist Association. He is both a Certified Practising Marketer and a Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute.



**Mr Neville Parsons**

Neville retired as CEO of Holiday Coast Credit Union in 2019, when they merged with Regional Australia Bank. Neville served as CEO for 31 years and now continues as a Director of Regional Australia Bank. Neville spent 2 years as a Principal in the Port Macquarie Law Firm Donovan Oates Hannford. In December 2022 Neville was appointed to the Board of Lifeline Mid Coast and also appointed Chair.

Neville is the Independent Chair of the Clarence Valley Council Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and is a long-serving member of the Rotary Club of Wauchope and is current Rotary District Governor for the 2022-2023 year for Rotary District 9660. Neville has been a long term supporter of Life Education NSW.

# Our Future



## Our Finances

**\$2.9m**  
Government grants

**\$1.4m**  
Education fees

**\$2.1m**  
Program support and administration

**\$1.7m**  
Cash on hand

**\$0.5m**  
Government COVID support

**\$0.7m**  
Fundraising, Donations, other income

**\$3.2m**  
Delivery costs (including Educator wages)

Life Ed NSW/ACT's financial records for the year ended 30 June 2022 were audited by Grant Thornton Australia in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. A full copy of our annual financial report is available on request.



# Our sustainability

## Reducing energy consumption

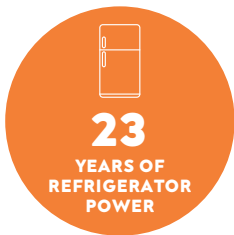
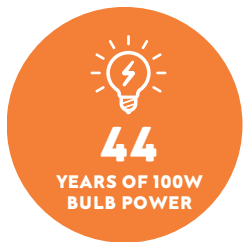
Thanks to the generous support of Life Ed ambassador, Ms Melissa McIntosh MP, our Colyton office headquarters are fully powered by clean energy.

Our Life Ed NSW office is fitted with solar electricity panels that capture the sun's energy and convert it into usable electricity. This not only lowers office utility bills, but more importantly, reduces our carbon footprint. In 2022, we produced 38.3 MWH of solar energy which is equivalent to:

## Investing in the future

Life Ed has taken the initiative to reduce our carbon footprint by investing in 6 new hybrid vehicles for our staff, with another 12 on order. Making the switch to hybrid cars reduces emissions and energy consumption, and forms a part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

With our new hybrid cars, Life Ed has been able to save approximately 4,000km worth of petrol and 1 tonne of CO2 emissions. This is equivalent to 50 trees saved.



All Aussies can now get behind supporting some of our most vulnerable children, ensuring they have access to our program. As little as \$25 can make a big difference in a young person's life, and your generous support will directly assist children and schools in rural, remote and low socio-economic areas to develop fundamental life skills.

Together, we can give these kids the chance they deserve

**To contribute, please email: [nsw@lifed.org.au](mailto:nsw@lifed.org.au)**

Thank you





Every child deserves to  
**thrive.**

## Contact us

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