

# LIFE EDUCATION NSW / ACT

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020



RESILIENCE THROUGH  
ADVERSITY

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I am so happy to see Life Education still going strong. I went to Santa Sabina College and remember all the years that Healthy Harold visited our school. It was the BEST and most fun learning that I remember! I am now a mum of three and I hope my girls get to see Healthy Harold at school, too.

**STEPHANIE BAHE** Parent

## Values

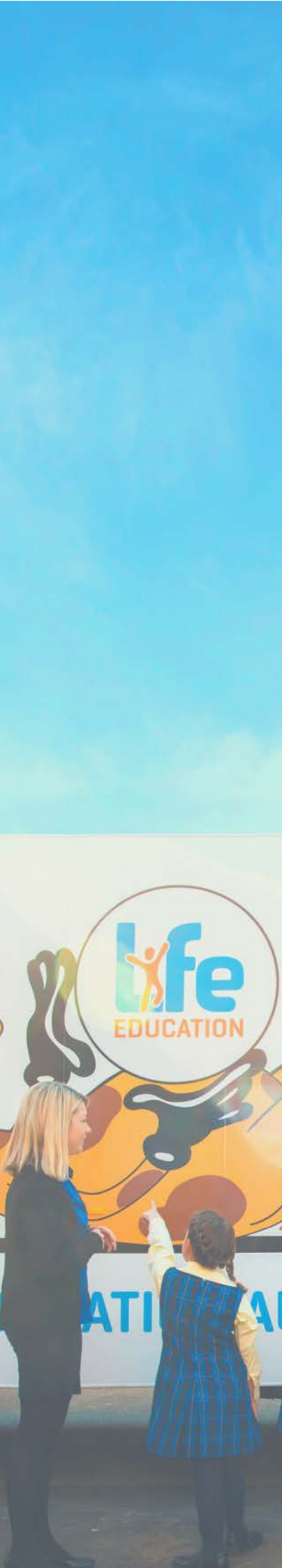
Respect, Integrity, Tenacity

## Vision

Generations of healthy young Australians living to their full potential

## Mission

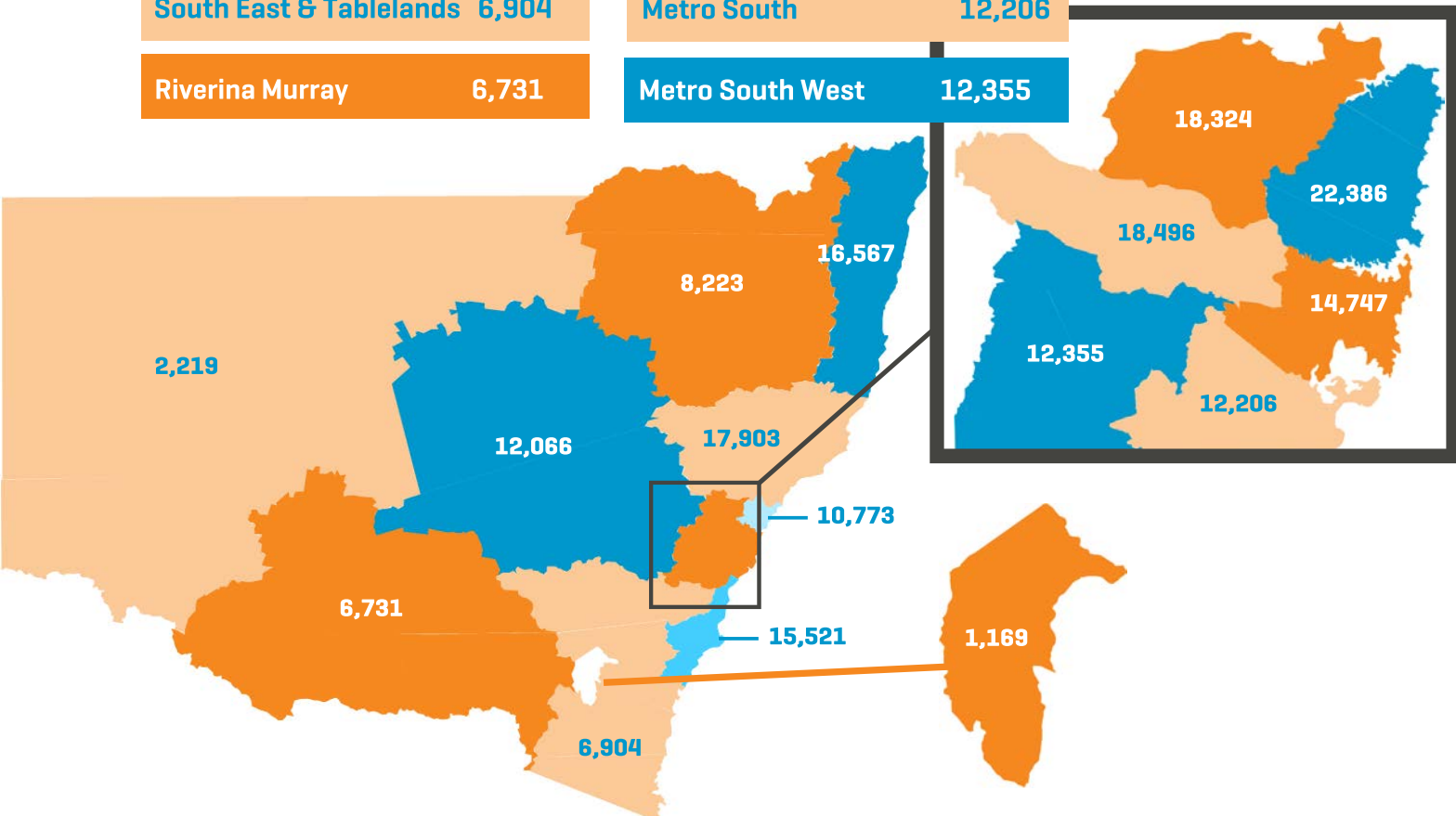
Empower our children and young people to make safer and healthier choices through education



# OUR REACH

## Students visited:

Far West	2,219	Central Coast	10,773
Hunter	17,903	ACT	1,169
North Coast	16,567	Metro North East	22,386
New England	8,223	Metro Inner & East	14,747
Central West & Orana	12,066	Metro West & Mountains	18,496
Illawarra Shoalhaven	15,521	Metro North West	18,324
South East & Tablelands	6,904	Metro South	12,206
Riverina Murray	6,731	Metro South West	12,355



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95%

of students who participate in our drug and alcohol modules said they will make safe decisions about drugs

# CHAIR'S MESSAGE

How we deal with challenges defines who we are and our wonderful country has faced big changes in the last two years. The drought was a grinding, gut-wrenching, almost everlasting test for families throughout New South Wales. Tragedies were abundant. Bushfires resulted in massive loss of property and loss of life. We faced the everlasting question of challenge – “Can I start again?”. And now we are still grappling with Covid-19.

Many NSW children have been through enormous strain. Homes and schools have been destroyed by fire and families have been under extreme pressure during the drought with losses of crops, livestock and in some tragic circumstance, loss of life – even of close relatives.

For almost 12 months the pandemic has tested the resolve of Australians. Schools closed their doors and physical distancing became the norm. Life Education was faced with the challenge of how to fulfil our mission of reaching and educating all children with health and wellbeing principles when they really needed it the most. Our board and local committees are so proud of how our Life Education teams rose to these challenges, beyond anything one believed possible.

Wherever Healthy Harold was needed – we were there. Teams of talented Life Education educators and staff all over NSW have rushed to help in places as far as Trundle, the South and North Coasts and all through city areas.

The story of how our teams developed new and innovative ways to reach children in need is inspirational. The story is piled high with friends and supporters who share our passion for raising the next generation of healthy Australians.

Thank you, everyone. You are valued and appreciated beyond description. Every staff member and every associate of Life Education has been striving to give children the tools they need to become resilient. Through learning safe and responsible decision making and understanding healthy relationships, children have not missed out on learning valuable life skills.

Amazing people producing amazing results – I hope you enjoy reading about some of them in this report.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Cadman".

**ALAN CADMAN**

Chairman, Life Education NSW / ACT



# CEO'S MESSAGE

Protecting the wellbeing of Aussie kids during drought, bushfires, floods and a global pandemic might seem like a tall order, even for an iconic giraffe with more than 40 years experience in health promotion.

The last year was a huge test for Life Education and the wider community. It was the first time ever that Life Education couldn't make it into NSW schools. We knew it was important that students receive the core messages we provide, especially around physical, mental, and social wellbeing, so a rapid rethink was needed. We also had a staff of 60 educators whose livelihoods were in question.

Moving a 40-year-old organisation online is an exciting [and daunting] opportunity not only to support schools and students through this extremely challenging time, but also to increase Life Education's long-term impact, reach and delivery approach on health and wellbeing education. To achieve this, it was critical to bring our staff on a journey of rapid change.

Engaging children through face-to-face learning is a powerful tool, but as technology advances new opportunities arise. Focusing on the wellbeing of our staff helped us to take the change journey that you will see in the coming pages. It also increased the impact that our program has on the next generation of young Australians.

We set our staff up for success, implementing an employee assistance and wellbeing program to create a safe and inclusive online space in which the team could interact, engage in project work and socialise. We dissected our strategic goals, engaging the team to reimagine our program delivery.

By seeing COVID-19 as an opportunity to fast-track business goals, we are now set up for success with multiple options for reaching children, no matter what the challenge, be it distance, financial constraints – or pandemic! The icing on the cake is that our expanded modes of delivery work together to give students more touch points for learning, reinforcing health messages in line with best practice health intervention evidence.



**JONATHON PEATFIELD**

CEO, Life Education NSW / ACT



# OUR IMPACT

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**Here's what students said after participating in our drug and alcohol modules:**

**94%**

said they will make good decisions about alcohol

**92%**

said our educators made the session interesting

**97%**

said the Life Education program helped them to understand the effects of alcohol on the body

**79%**

felt 'excited' or 'happy' about participating in the program

**95%**

said they will make good decisions about drugs

**99%**

said they understood the effects of alcohol on the body

**84%**

said they learned something new

\*Survey of 707 primary school aged students who participated in a Life Education program in 2020. This survey is supported by NSW Ministry of Health.

# WHAT STUDENTS SAY

"I will make better and healthier decisions.  
Thank you, Healthy Harold!"

"I learnt that everyone can stress as much as me, so I'm not the only one! This lesson also helped me build up my confidence!"

"I learnt that vapes have the same drug as cigarettes."

"Everything I learnt was useful. Allergies, antibiotics and medicine was very interesting to learn about. Especially since we have this pandemic right now."

"I learnt that whatever you're feeling actually affects your body and mental health."



"Despite this year's unprecedented challenges, the Life Education team, with support of the Board, has responded amazingly by leveraging available government support and redeploying team members to accelerate our strategy to transform our delivery and funding models. This has ensured minimal disruption to the delivery of programs to our young people across the state."

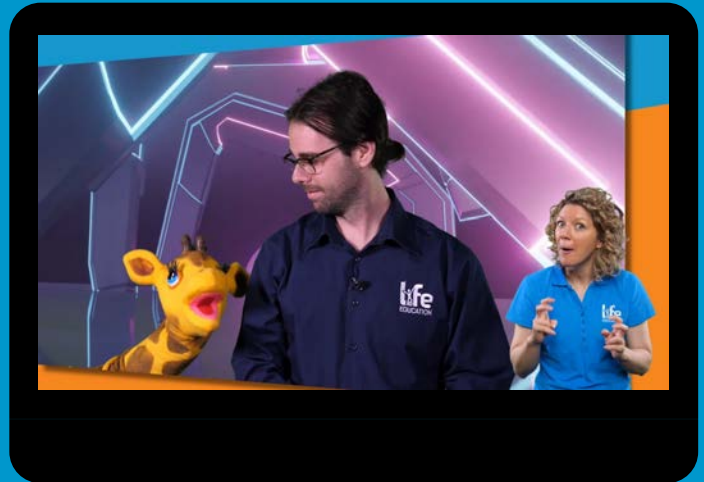
# OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

## Online

COVID-19 physical restrictions and school closures didn't stop us from supporting children, parents and school communities to stay safe and healthy. Life Education Online, developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Education and supported by the Vital Resources Fund, is based on our most popular modules. Lessons explore healthy eating, personal safety, physical activity, cybersafety and the impact of alcohol and other drugs.

The NSW-developed program has also been extended to other states, including Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. Schools tell us their students love engaging with the online content and find it easy to navigate and complete.

Thanks to the support of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, our online modules include an Auslan interpreter, so no child misses out on vital health education.



My students were very engaged with the online content and had some in-depth class discussions. They related to both the content and the scenarios.

**TEACHER** KANWAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Virtual



Our newly developed virtual classroom is helping us reach more children with valuable health education at a time when they need it most.

Students from Lord Howe Island Central School, along with NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, Sarah Mitchell (pictured left), participated in the first trial of our virtual classroom in September.

Situated approximately 500km east of Port Macquarie, Lord Howe Island Central School is only reachable by boat or air. It was the first time ever students from the school were able to receive a visit from Healthy Harold. Our virtual classroom is developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Education and supported by the Vital Resources Fund.

"It was great to tune into Healthy Harold's visit to Lord Howe Central School. It's amazing to see how COVID-19 innovations have enabled programs to reach even more students in regional and remote NSW."





[L-R] Parkes East Public School Principal Michael Ostler, Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, Healthy Harold, Life Education NSW / ACT Educator Alana Masi, Life Education NSW / ACT Board Director and Parkes Shire Mayor Cr Ken Keith and NSW / ACT CEO Jonathon Peatfield.



## Outdoor pop-up classroom

Children from Parkes were the first in the state to experience a new-look outdoor Healthy Harold classroom, bringing health education to students in an innovative and COVID-safe way.

An agile alternative to the van, the Life Education pop-up outdoor classroom is designed to be used in schools that can't accommodate a van or when a quick response is required. It fits in the back of a purpose-built ute and inflates in a matter of minutes.

"We were disappointed when Harold couldn't visit in the van earlier in the year [due to COVID-19] but jumped at the chance to be the first school in the state to utilise this outdoor option. The new classroom is an important way of getting across the healthy lifestyle message while maintaining the Healthy Harold magic."

**MICHAEL OSTLER**

PARKES EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



"To see Life Education evolve in the shape of an outdoor classroom couldn't come at a better time and will ensure that students in our region continue to receive important messages about a healthy lifestyle even through these uncertain times and well in to the future."

**CR KEN KEITH OAM**

LIFE EDUCATION NSW / ACT DIRECTOR





# OUR PEOPLE

In 2020, Life Education faced its biggest challenge yet. It was the first time in 40 years that we couldn't make it into NSW schools. The wellbeing of Australian children, and our 60 educators' livelihoods, were in question.

Thanks to the JobKeeper assistance, Life Education was able to secure employment for staff, offering them a range of flexible options to balance work and personal needs.

To enhance wellbeing and keep staff connected during isolation, we launched a raft of employment wellness initiatives. This included an Employment Assistance Program [Uprise], Mental Health First Aid training, and regular catch-ups via Microsoft Teams. Our educators also pivoted their health education knowledge, running wellness challenges to encourage staff engagement.

Despite school closures and social distancing measures, Life Education and its much-loved mascot Healthy Harold forged forward, ensuring the youngest members of our society weren't left behind.

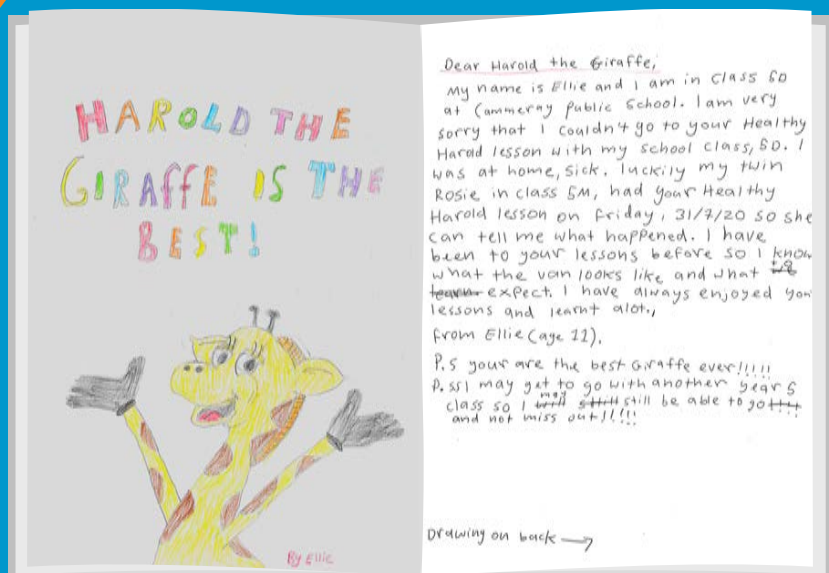


The year 2020 and COVID-19 provided a unique combination of challenges that were confronted, head on, by our incredibly talented, dedicated and adaptable team. Life Education educators navigated their way through working from home, participating in project work, leaning in to new processes, developing the first online modules, taking care of each other's well-being at a difficult time and expanding into unknown and at times uncomfortable terrain, by teaching virtually. They did this with one end goal in mind: to ensure they could continue to do what they love. Empowering children and young people to make healthy and safe choices through education.

8.

**ANGELA GREEN**

LIFE EDUCATION NSW / ACT EDUCATION MANAGER



Ellie, student at Cammeray Public School



## Healthy Harold goes wildlife watching to combat isolation

During school – and zoo – closures, we found a way for Australia’s lovable educational giraffe to catch up with children and animal friends by creating a social media video series. Starring Healthy Harold, Zookeeper Chad and a menagerie of animal friends from Mogo and Featherdale Sydney Wildlife Parks, 'Wildlife Watching with Healthy Harold' is a free resource for schools and families, packed full of healthy tips and fun animal facts.

## Switched on for brain health

We also supported upper primary and secondary students through our partnership with NSW Health, sharing the 'Respect your Brain' video series, which teaches young people about the effects of drugs on behaviour and brain development.



\*'Protect your Brain' animated video series by NSW Health

"It has been inspirational to see the Life Education team showing exactly the sort of resilience and persistence in the face of extraordinary challenges that we aim to instil in young people throughout the state."

**DR JULIAN DE MEYRICK** LIFE EDUCATION NSW / ACT DIRECTOR



# OUR COLLABORATORS



We are working with our partners in fun and creative ways to reach more families with vital health and wellbeing education.

With the support of Hyundai Help for Kids, in 2019 we offered families the chance to win a brand new Hyundai i30 through our Life Education raffle initiative.

With the help of our supporters, we are reaching more high school students with cutting edge preventative drug education.

Our Reality Now program, developed with the support of nib foundation, is an interactive survey tool designed to explore students' existing attitudes, perceptions and behaviours about alcohol and drug use and dispel myths surrounding their peers' drug and alcohol use. Through greater awareness and knowledge about their peers' behaviours, students are able to dispel peer pressure, and make more informed, safer and healthier choices relating to alcohol and other drugs.

More than 1,000 students in the Hunter area are set to benefit from this program, thanks to the support of Bengalla Mining Company.



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The Reality Now sessions were valuable and informative, and provided many ideas for how to better inform our students about preventative drug education. We are very grateful to Bengalla for funding this opportunity.

10.

**JESSICA WITHERS** PDHPE HEAD TEACHER, MUSWELLBROOK HIGH

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So far, the Reality Now program is showing amazing results. It's so important that we start to break down the stigma around talking about drugs.

**BOBBIE MCDONALD** LIFE EDUCATION NSW / ACT EDUCATOR



## Lessons for life

We partnered with Macquarie University, the University of Technology Sydney, and Western Sydney University, demonstrating that Life Education lessons extend well beyond the younger years. Projects included the development of a framework for evaluating our program and analysing our impact, and innovative marketing solutions. This led to three student internship opportunities, assisting young people on the path to future marketing and health promotion careers.



[L-R]: Life Education NSW / ACT interns Stephanie Milton, Samantha McKechnie, Tom Marshall

"As a Health Science student, when people ask me 'What is health promotion?', I always answer 'Do you remember Healthy Harold? That is what health promotion is all about!'"

**SAMANTHA MCKECHNIE** LIFE EDUCATION NSW /ACT HEALTH PROMOTION INTERN



Kath Koschel from the Kindness Factory gave a keynote speech at our Annual Conference about resilience and the impact of kindness.

Collaboration is a focus for our organisation. We have been creating supportive work environments by sharing our Colyton facilities with NSW Cancer Council and engaging participants from disability support service, Thorndale Foundation. At our Annual Conference, we were rewarded by Thorndale participant, Steve, with a DJ set.

Youth preventative mental health organisation, batyr, ran a mental health awareness program at our Annual Conference to help break the stigma around mental health and promote honest conversations.





## SUPPORTING BUSHFIRE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES



Last summer was difficult for many families. During the season's bushfire emergency our supporters and volunteers lent a hand to assist communities in need. Volunteer Rohan Gleeson from Moruya Rotary helped Healthy Harold and his van get around during the school year. During the bushfires, he used the van to deliver water bottles to thirsty crews on the ground from the Rural Fire Service and Australian Defence Force Reserves.

Life Education was committed to reaching all disaster-affected communities. Thanks to funding from The Fred P Archer Charitable Trust (managed by Perpetual), all schools in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA received a Life Education visit to help young people in the community build resilience and foster wellbeing after the bushfires.

Wyaliba Public School, which burned down during the 'Black Summer' bushfires, was a recipient of our 2020 Growing Good Gardens Grants, supported by Yates Australia.

To top it off, our friends at Woolworths donated seedlings to 11 of our school partners in drought and fire-affected regions, to help brighten their day.

Our school and food garden were destroyed in the November bushfires. We are now rebuilding. Working in the garden is helping the kids to build self-confidence, self-reliance and social skills for the kids. The garden is part of the recovery process after a traumatic experience.

**ANNA MACKAY**

WYALIBA PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT

"At times of crisis, whether in drought, fire, pandemic or otherwise, the work of Life Education in educating young Australians to make healthy choices is even more important. The team has led from the front in adapting, lifting spirits and responding to the challenges of our time in a smart and sensitive fashion."



# OUR COMMUNITY



We are grateful to our many Life Action Groups - including Tweed, Illawarra, Ryde, and Hunter Care - and other dedicated and passionate volunteers and supporters who are the driving force behind what we do in NSW local communities. They are hard at work bringing the joy of Healthy Harold to children at local events, and fundraising so more students can access the Life Education program in their local area.



Our volunteers help to keep our wheels turning



# OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Back [L-R]: Mr Aaron Chen, Mr Neville Parsons, Ms Jackie O'Brien, Dr Julian de Meyrick.  
Front: Mr Bill Buckle, The Hon. Alan Cadman OAM, Mr Tim James. Not pictured: Cr Ken Keith OAM

## THE HON ALAN G CADMAN OAM

### Chairman NSW

Alan served as the Federal Member for Mitchell for 33 years including service as Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Relations and Small Business and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. A long-term supporter of Life Education, Alan is a 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.



### CR KEN KEITH OAM

Ken is in his 12th year as Mayor of Parkes and 36th year on the Parkes Shire Council. A leader in agricultural education, Ken previously taught at Forbes and Windsor High Schools. He runs a fine wool Merino and first-cross lamb enterprise with cropping in NSW's Central West.

## DR JULIAN DE MEYRICK

Julian has held a number of senior higher education positions including membership of academic boards and Academic Senate. He was Dean of Students at Macquarie University and Director, Higher Education at Sydney Institute of TAFE. He continues to publish academic papers and until recently was a sessional lecturer at Macquarie University. Julian previously worked in marketing management for Unilever, American Express, Bushell's and the Hong Kong Tourist Association. He is both a Certified Practising Marketer and Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute.

## MR NEVILLE PARSONS

Neville is one of the Principals at Port Macquarie law firm Donovan Oates Hannaford. He joined the firm in September 2019 after a 31-year tenure as CEO of Holiday Coast Credit Union Ltd (HCCU) that concluded on 1 July 2019 when HCCU transferred its business to Regional Australia Bank, where Neville continues to serve as a Director. He is a long-serving member of the Rotary Club of Wauchope and Deputy Chairman of the Mid North Coast Local Health Board.

## MR BILL BUCKLE

Bill spent 35 years in the retail motor industry including a significant tenure as Managing Director of one of Sydney's largest dealerships. He previously served on the Board of the Motor Traders' Association Executive, as President of Toyota's Dealer Association and Chairman of Toyota's Finance Dealer Association. He was also a Member of the Subaru Advertising Executive and Audi Marketing Group.

## MR AARON CHEN

Aaron brings governance and financial strengths 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 JACKIE O'BRIEN

Jackie O'Brien is a Partner in intellectual property law at Norton Rose Fulbright. She has legal and technical versatility across a broad range of industry sectors and is ranked in Chambers Global, Best Lawyers, Managing Intellectual Property and World Trademark Review as a leader in her field. Jackie won the Partner of the Year Award in the 2014 Lawyers Weekly Australian Law Awards and is a member of the Graduate Recruitment Committee and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Norton Rose Fulbright.

## MR TIM JAMES

Tim is a lawyer, strategic advisory leader and director who works as Executive General Manager at the Menzies Research Centre. He is the former CEO of Medicines Australia and has held leadership roles at Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson. Tim also served as a NSW Government Minister's Chief of Staff and served for 6 years in the Howard Government, including in the Prime Minister's Office.





LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Community Recognition Statements

LIFE EDUCATION'S WORK THROUGH COVID-19

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)

Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the work done by Life Education Australia to successfully adapt their Healthy Harold program to ensure children across New South Wales safely receive essential life education.

Life Education Australia has been providing Australian school students with the skills and knowledge they need to live a healthy and safe lifestyle for over 40 years. This education is delivered in a way that is both interactive and engaging for students, which allows educators to teach children about vital and serious topics.

This service has traditionally been provided through a mobile learning centre; however, to ensure children remain educated on essential topics whilst staying safe, Life Education has adapted its teaching method to provide online modules. These modules stress the importance of key areas such as cybersecurity, resilience and good physical and emotional health.

I want to take this time to congratulate Life Education on their successful transition and commend the executive team, Chair, the Hon. Alan Cadman OAM, National CEO Kellie Sloane and New South Wales CEO Jonathon Peatfield for their dedication and commitment to the children of New South Wales.

Mark Coure MP  
Member for Oatley



"I was nine years old when I met Healthy Harold when he came to Picnic Point Public School. I remember how the whole concept of Healthy Harold captured the imagination of the young people."

**THE HON. DAVID ELLIOTT, MP**

NSW MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

# OUR AMBASSADORS

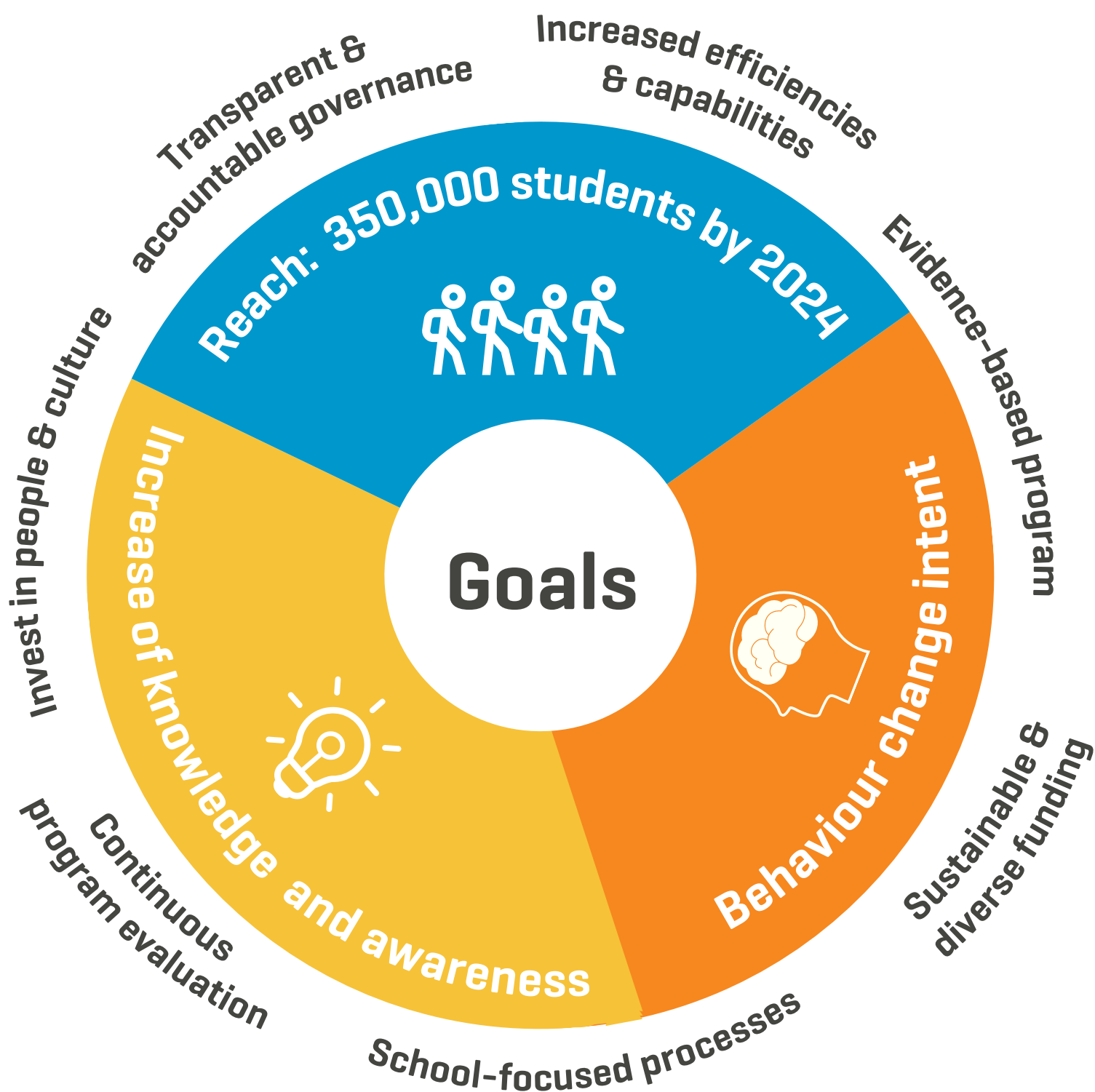
All across NSW local communities are empowering children to strive for healthy futures with Life Education. Life Education currently has more than 100 State and Federal MP ambassadors who help us to support our program in their local areas. Many of our MP Ambassadors are also graduates of the Life Education program, including Minister for Education and Early Childhood, Sarah Mitchell and NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott. In October 2019, Life Education NSW welcomed nine more ambassadors at an event at Parliament House, Sydney.



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# OUR FUTURE



## OUR FINANCES [MILLIONS]

<b>\$2.8</b>	<b>\$0.7</b>	<b>\$1.8</b>	<b>\$0.9</b>	<b>\$3.8</b>	<b>\$2.3</b>	<b>\$0.5</b>
Government grants	Government COVID support	Education fees (down 33% from last year)	Fundraising, Donations, other income	Delivery costs (including Educator wages)	Program support and administration	Cash on hand (LY \$0.3m)



# THANK YOU



## Healthy Harold Scholarship Fund

**No child** misses out in 2021

No child should miss out on vital health and wellbeing education. We're often told the Life Education visit is the highlight of the school year. We want all children to experience the joy and benefits of a Healthy Harold visit.

Our Healthy Harold Scholarship Fund helps us reach kids who might otherwise miss out due to financial constraints. Help support our Healthy Harold Scholarship Fund. Email: [nsw@lifeeducation.org.au](mailto:nsw@lifeeducation.org.au)

## CONTACT US

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## SUPPORT US

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[www.lifeeducation.org.au/shop](http://www.lifeeducation.org.au/shop)

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@lifeeducationNSW



# NO CHILD MISSES OUT

New online  
& virtual  
classes

Healthy  
Harold  
Scholarship  
Fund

More face-to-  
face options

Vans, pop-up  
classrooms, and  
in-class delivery

ABN 59 053 737 045

