Iris Foundation is a grassroots organisation that depends on the generosity and commitment of local people to continue our work. As well as major supporters publicly noted in this report, we would like to acknowledge all the individuals and groups who contributed via donations, fundraising, volunteering and other gifts throughout the year.
CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Two of the key objectives of Iris Foundation have struck me as being particularly necessary throughout this past year: Supporting Resilience and Embracing Hope. We have needed these more than ever as the COVID-19 pandemic made life harder for everyone. We have seen the business and personal impacts of restrictions and lockdowns take their toll. We have all been touched by friends and family who have at times struggled to just get through another day.

And yet, even when things seemed darker, the passion and commitment of staff, board members, volunteers, supporters and friends of Iris Foundation have brought light and hope. Iris Foundation has come out of this year stronger. We have learned new ways of doing things, new ways of cultivating connections, and new ways of delivering services and supports to those doing it tough.

Through this annual report, you will read how Iris Foundation has achieved the strategic goals:
- Supporting Resilience: You will learn how Iris Foundation has delivered a five-fold increase in programs that support resilience
- Embracing Hope: You will discover how Iris Foundation has shared stories of hope such as through supporting research and networks into the challenging mental health impacts of perimenopause
- Cultivating Connections: You will rejoice in the power of networks and connections through the Community & Business Women's Network
- Resilient Organisation: and underneath it all you will find out how dedicated board members, staff and workers have sustained Iris Foundation though the pandemic and grown its impact.

On behalf of the Board, I am very proud to commend this Annual Report to you. We have achieved our strategic goals and we have begun the process for setting new goals for the coming years.

This report is a testimony to our staff, ably led by Sue Liptrott, and our supporters. This annual report shows that Iris Foundation has lived its purpose of fostering resilience, hope and connection in our community.

I want to thank each and every Board member, Sue and the amazing staff, and our generous supporters. Together with you, I know that Iris Foundation will rise to the challenges that remain in this “living with COVID” reality. Together we will foster hope, connections and resilience in each person we encounter, and so reduce the risk of suicide in our community.

Thank you.

Andrew Tuck
Chair, Iris Foundation
2021 in review

- **20** Programs & Workshops in school
  - **300** students involved

- Community & Business Women's Network welcomes **400th** Member

- Cool Connections program accepted for listing on the **BeYou Programs Directory**

- Because We Care Boutique
  - adopted 1st July 2021

- Debbie Gaunt Foundation raises **$44,000** for Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre

- **Auspice support** - 2 new local initiatives:
  - Hope Family Cottage
  - UrVoice Australia

- **New Corporate Sponsor** - PBL Law Group

- NSW Business Awards Outstanding Community Organisation
RESILIENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS

Connections in School are mental health and well-being programs and workshops for preadolescent students aged 9-12 years.

Focusing on the student's strengths, they aim to increase resilience, working with children to build their confidence, better manage their mental and emotional wellbeing, while developing their social skills and to create a sense of connectedness with others at school and in the community.

The first half of the year saw huge demand following the onset of COVID-19 in 2020. However, school closures in term 3 & 4 hampered our work and saw a return to an innovative online format, in some schools, allowing our facilitators to support isolated young people in safe, adaptable ways.

[The workshops] explore and teach students a range of strategies that can be applied in moments of hardship and normalise emotions that can be difficult at a young age.

This is a truly special program and worth its weight in gold.

Anika O’Brien, Teacher, Wyee Public School

As part of Iris Foundation's commitment to continuous improvement, the Cool Connections in School program is currently undergoing a rigorous self-assessment for accreditation through Quality Innovation Performance Limited (QIP) against Suicide Prevention Australia Quality Standards framework. Completing in January, the self-assessment phase has entailed a deep analysis of every aspect of the program's planning, delivery and evaluation. Working through this process has improved efficiency, accountability and quality assurance across our organisation. This has been made possible through Corporate Sponsorship from PBL Law Group - with thanks.

In 2021 the Cool Connections program was successfully mapped to the current National Curriculum General Capabilities Learning Areas of: Personal and Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Capabilities, Ethical Understanding, and Intercultural Understanding (ACARA, 2020). This allows the Iris Foundation to support schools and teachers directly.

The program has been accepted for listing on the BeYou Programs Directory. The Directory is designed to assist schools to select suitable mental health and wellbeing programs for their learning community. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Be You is led by Beyond Blue with the support of delivery partners Headspace and Early Childhood Australia.
RESILIENCE-BASED PROGRAMS AND WORKSHOPS

Resilience

Life has certainly delivered challenges for us all, and for some these are significant and devastating. Resilience has never been more important than now. We encourage everyone to take a proactive approach to be a champion for resilience and a positive influence to those around you.

We continually instill a similar message when working with the younger generation through our programs - to build and hold hope for their future, to develop the skills and knowledge to face adversity, the resilience to overcome challenges and to build connections and a sense of belonging.

For those who are struggling, it is a sign of strength to ask for help – please ask.
My life started to change for the better the first day I walked into the Because We Care Boutique. I was greeted by beautiful and caring women who accepted me right away. Nothing was a problem for them – that first styling session made me feel like a princess. The staff were so encouraging and believed in me when I couldn’t do that for myself.

Emily, Because We Care Boutique client

In response to prolonged lockdowns across the Central Coast, the Because We Care Boutique began offering postal services for women in need. This ensured that clients could safely access clothing and accessories for job interviews and other important meetings. This has proven a useful back-up option for clients and their supporting organisations.

The Because We Care Boutique gratefully received a funding boost in July with a $10,000 cheque presented by Adam Crouch MP. These funds were made available through the Department of Regional NSW.

Central Coast Council provided a $20,000 grant in December to assist with development of the Wings to Succeed project to further enhance pathways for support, growth and connection for the Boutique clients through workshops, mentoring and coffee & chat groups.

We would also like to acknowledge generous support from Advice Co & Count Charitable Foundation.
Established in 2018, CBWN is open to all women who want to network, make friends, learn, share ideas and support local business.

The best experience I’ve had with this group has been the networking and connections I’ve been able to build quickly. Come along because there’s just a sense of support and connection and community that you can’t get anywhere else. Kristen Budd

We kick-started the year supporting two events to mark International Women’s Day 2021. Breakfast attendees heard inspiring stories from retired Detective Superintendent Deb Wallace, a ground-breaking leader within NSW Police. Lunch attendees were entertained by actor, singer and author Anni Finsterer.

A new website was launched, created and now managed by the team at WebAdjusted. It includes news, events and a private members directory – all in CBWN’s distinctive pink style.

Amidst restrictions and lockdowns, CBWN welcomed 75 new financial members to the Network in 2021.
IRIS FOUNDATION
2021 FINALIST

Iris Foundation was honoured to be among the finalists in Business NSW’s Central Coast Regional Business Awards for 2021. Iris was recognised in the category of ‘Outstanding Community Organisation’. This award recognises an organisation that works to improve the social, cultural or environmental wellbeing of the local community.

SUPPORTING LOCAL GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES

Iris Foundation supports many promising and relevant local grassroots initiatives that align with our mission and values through the collaborative relationship of auspicing.

**Debbie Gaunt Foundation** - dedicated to raising funds to better understand the mental health impacts of perimenopause.
DGF hit a major milestone in August, raising $44,000 for the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre in Melbourne. This outstanding effort helped to achieve the completion of an online training module to better educate doctors about perimenopause. DGF also received media coverage via the Nine Network and interest from medical professionals working in the field.

**Men Care Too**, an independent support organisation for men in unpaid, informal caring roles. Since leaving the Central Coast for Tasmania in 2020, founder Greg Smith has continued his efforts to support isolated men through regular BBQs, walking groups, online connections and a weekly newsletter.
www.mencaretoo.org

**Hope Family Cottage** is a newly established community-based organisation which provides supervised child contact and family support services to those experiencing family breakdown and crises. The Cottage was officially opened in December by David Harris MP and Emma McBride MP.
www.hopefamilycottage.org.au

**UrVoice Australia** - giving students tools to speak out. Speak Out @ School is an all-in-one student welfare system for use for parents, students, teachers, and the school wellbeing team. Pilot project delivery in high schools expected April -June 2022.
www.urvoice.com.au
AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

World Suicide Prevention Day
- 10th September

Iris Foundation’s annual Tree of Dreams campaign, which coincides with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, went virtual this year. In lieu of a public gathering, locals were encouraged to light a candle in remembrance and hope. The Budgewoi community was particularly active in taking up this call, sharing images of their candles and lanterns on social media and generously donating in support of Iris Foundation’s work to reduce the risk of suicide on the Central Coast.

Mental Health Month
- October

Iris Foundation embraced the theme of this year’s Mental Health Month, ‘Tune In For Ten’. Our social media campaign encouraged Central Coast residents to make simple efforts to ‘tune in’ – that is, to be present with ourselves and other people – for ten days during the month. Simple actions such as meditating, being in nature, chatting with a friend or reaching out to someone enduring difficulties can help improve mental well-being.
Government restrictions hampered fundraising efforts once again in 2021, but we still managed to get in a few major memorable ones. Thank you to all those that fundraised on our behalf. It meant so much to us to boost funds to keep the organisation running.

**February - Trivia Night**
Iris Foundation's first trivia night fundraiser proved to be a welcome chance for 170 friends and supporters to gather at Wyong Rugby League Club. Many of the guests committed fully to the ‘80s theme, helping to create a memorable night for all involved.

**May - Italian Dinner**
Long-time Iris Foundation Ambassadors Robert and Silvana Natoli hosted several fundraisers in 2021. A lavish dinner at their Wyong business, La Carta Art Gallery Cafe, on May 1 was a particular highlight. Guests enjoyed a four-course meal in the signature Natoli style – great food in a welcoming atmosphere.

**October - Ray of Sunshine**
Local accountant and CBWN member Nathalie Ainsworth held two Iris Foundation fundraisers to mark Mental Health Month, each with a unique creative twist. A keen painter, Nathalie auctioned off one of her own works via social media. She also gifted a ‘A Ray of Sunshine’ photo, featuring sunrises she photographed during lockdown, to all October donors. Thank you, Nathalie!

**December - Budgewoi Tree of Dreams**
The 5th annual campaign to raise awareness of suicide prevention on the Central Coast. The campaign works towards heightening awareness of the impact of suicide, and increasing conversations about preventing suicide. Founder Kylie Skinner (Owner of Peachies Hair Studio Budgewoi), began this Tree of Dreams journey after losing an unforgettable friend to suicide. Generous donations received from the community will be directed into our local school programs.
OUR SUPPORTERS - with thanks

IRIS FOUNDATION
Corporate Supporter

PBL Law
WebAdjusted

Major Program Funders

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation
Mingara Recreation Club
The Entrance Leagues Club
Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club
Bateau Bay Bowling Club
Wyong Rugby League Club
Sisters of Charity
Rotary Club of Brisbane Water

Major Supporters

Fortunity
Wideline Windows and Doors
Sharp DS Central Coast
Southern Cross Austereo
BBX
Your Guide Central Coast
Wyong Community Bank
- branch of Bendigo Bank
Oddball Marketing
BPW Central Coast
Essence Images
Event Cinemas Tuggerah

Iris Foundation Ambassadors

$1,000+

TrendPac
La Carta Art Gallery Cafe
Ainsworth Accounting Solutions
Northlakes Toukley Rotary
Ray Hinds
Royal Hotel Wyong
Peachies Hair Studio Budgewoi
Erina Ice Arena

BECAUSE WE CARE BOUTIQUE

Major Supporter

Central Coast Council
Department of Regional NSW
- Adam Crouch MP
Stone Real Estate
Advice Co
Count Charitable Foundation
Kwik Kopy Tuggerah

$1,000+

Stockland Care
Mingara Recreation Club
Erina Ice Arena
Victoria Gilbert
Your Guide Central Coast
EYS Travel - Kerin Starr
Royal Hotel Wyong