



## FOUNDATION UPDATE - DECEMBER 2022



### From the Chair

This is my first newsletter as the new Chair of the Eastern Star Foundation. It has been another great year for the Foundation where four grants totalling over \$272,000 were given to empower those who help our aged to live well.

We are now starting to see the outcomes and impacts of those, and previous grants given. You can read the stories about how two grants have impacted the lives of our aged on page two. Further stories are on our website [www.easternstarfoundation.org.au](http://www.easternstarfoundation.org.au) and I also encourage you to follow us on LinkedIn.

We have just closed off applications for this financial year's grant round, and we look forward to assessing the applications and making some announcements in the early part of 2023.

### Changes in Board positions

We recently held our Annual General

Meeting of our Company Members where John Howard, Victoria Lister, Roz Black and I were re-elected for a further two-year term. At the Board meeting held immediately after the Annual General Meeting, I was appointed as the Chair, while John Howard was re-appointed to the position of Deputy Chair and Beth Littler as Secretary.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Jonathan Nantes for his term as Chair. Jonathan held the position for many years and during our transition from an aged and community care business to a philanthropic foundation. As you are aware, Jonathan was recently installed as the Most Worthy Grand Patron of the United Grand Chapter of Australia, Order of the Eastern Star. We are grateful to still have his knowledge, dedication, and commitment on the Board as a Director.

### Our governance activities

A commitment to good governance practices is a focus of our Board. This includes strong attendance at board meetings and undertaking committee and board evaluations to ensure we are achieving our objects. The board closely monitors the financial performance of both business operations and the investment portfolio.

### Investment portfolio

Investment markets globally continued to see some turbulence last financial

year as a result of COVID-19. Like many investment portfolios, the value of our portfolio declined and was valued at \$10.6 million as of 30 June 2022. However, our investment strategy has a conservative risk profile to ensure our portfolio can withstand market fluctuations over the long-term and provide ongoing granting proceeds annually. We continue to work with Ord Minnett who provide a very valuable investment service to our organization.

I encourage you to read more about the Eastern Star Foundation's activities in our Annual Report which is available on our website at [www.easternstarfoundation.org.au](http://www.easternstarfoundation.org.au)

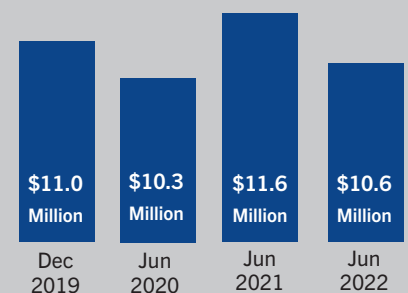
On behalf of the Eastern Star Foundation, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. We look forward to a rewarding year next year where we can continue to help our aged to live well.

Yours sincerely

**Elizabeth Watt**

Chair, Eastern Star Foundation

### Value of investment portfolio



Eastern Star Foundation 2022 grant recipients with Eastern Star Foundation Directors and Order of the Eastern Star Grand Office Bearers at the Grand Chapter of Queensland Installation.

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## Helping to form winning teams like Anne-Marie and Jerry



When a Guide Dog team comes together, the news is worthy of being shared far and wide, because it takes a whole community, including the support of organisations such as the Eastern Star Foundation, to make these partnerships happen. One such partnership is Anne-Marie and her Guide Dog, Jerry.

Anne-Marie transitioned to retirement on the Gold Coast after working as an

Occupational Therapist both in New Zealand and Australia for many years. But with more time to herself and surrounded by beautiful beaches, she realised that she missed being able to go for walks independently and swimming. That's when Anne-Marie decided to apply for a Guide Dog.

"A Guide Dog makes everything smoother for me. I've been a cane user for many years, but there is something special about working with a Guide Dog. It's just easier and I have so much more independence."

"Jerry is my third Guide Dog, and he is such a smart little man. He loves to please; everything is a game to him, and he loves a work challenge."

Being matched with a Guide Dog and receiving orientation and mobility services is a life-changing experience that would not be possible without the support of donors such as the grant of \$50,000 received from the Eastern Star Foundation Last year.

The grant was used to purchase a vehicle and pay for the vehicle's running costs for 12 months to ensure that senior clients like Anne-Marie with low or no vision in South East Queensland, and their Guide Dogs, could access programs, training and services in the community.

"With a fit-for-purpose vehicle, like the one the Eastern Star Foundation funded, we can improve efficiencies including training more Guide Dogs, in between delivering services to clients," said Lee Buckingham, Guide Dog Services General Manager.

Eastern Star Foundation Chair Elizabeth Watt, said the Foundation's purpose was to provide grants to support evidence-based programs and initiatives that help the aged to remain independent, practice choice, participate in their community and have a support network.

"We are incredibly proud to have been able to help build Guide Dog teams such as Anne-Marie and Jerry," said Elizabeth.

## Laughter Care Program enhances lives of aged care residents

Recently, the halls of Blue Care in Bli Bli rang with peals of laughter from a usually quiet room. The staff paused their duties in surprise, curious to see what was causing resident, Victoria, such delight since she had been increasingly withdrawn and keeping to her room.

Inside, Victoria was not lonely. Laughter Care specialist, Juney, was at her bedside speaking conspiratorially after the breaking news that the Queen had passed away and bonding over their shared thoughts on Charles. Slowly the conversation drifted from the royal family as Victoria drew on moments from her own life as a young woman. Through music, the memories became stronger and Juney offered to play one of Victoria's favourite songs. Meanwhile, astounded staff could not believe the noticeably improved mood and engagement.

Thanks to a \$54,200 grant from the Eastern Star Foundation, Juney's visit to Blue Care at Bli Bli is a weekly occurrence through The Humour Foundation's Laughter Care program – a world-first combining the proven benefits of humour therapy with genuine human connection. Laughter Care specialists are professional performers trained in

sensitivity and empathy to address the unique needs of aged care residents. The program was specifically designed in Australia to assist people living with dementia (52% of aged care residents) and those experiencing social isolation and withdrawal.

Juney is one of many Laughter Care specialists who use humour and reminiscence therapy as an artform to encourage residents to become actively involved. The Laughter Care specialists enter as friends paying a 'special visit' to people living with dementia, in what is now their home. They engage each resident using music, props, stories, improvisation, and reminiscence. Their carefully put together costumes speak to a period associated with a more active time in the resident's life.

The SMILE Study was undertaken by The Humour Foundation to measure the impact the Laughter Care program had on aged care residents living with dementia. The core findings showed agitation levels of residents decreased to the same extent as antipsychotic drugs – but without the side effects. Humour therapy is also proven to have numerous physiological and psychological benefits, including relieving fear, stress, and

pain, as well as positive effects on the cardiovascular, immune, and respiratory systems.

A Laughter Care specialist's red nose is an invitation to play – enabling each resident to relax and interact on their own terms. This person-centred approach results in real relationship building and connection, in fact Victoria asked to see Juney again and Blue Care staff noted that this positive effect has been replicated throughout the facility with each unique connection formed.

"I could see a very clear change in her, she was smiling more and happy to see me" said Juney, after her second visit with Victoria.

