

Wednesday, 10 January 2017

\$15,500 from Newcastle Permanent staff salary donations will support grieving families

Bears Of Hope, an organisation that supports and care for families who experience the loss of a child, through pregnancy or during infancy, today received a \$15,500 cheque to assist in the delivery of their programs.

The funds have been raised through the Newcastle Permanent Staff Community Assist Program—an elective program where staff donate money for charity directly from their fortnightly salaries. Participating staff nominate and vote on the charities that will be the beneficiaries of the donated funds. Each year four charities are recipients of the donated funds, given in two donation rounds.

Bears Of Hope was nominated by Newcastle Permanent staff member, Brianne Donald, who received a Bear Of Hope when her child passed away.

“When we were given a Bear of Hope, which had been donated by another grieving family, we were reminded that there were others out there who had walked in our shoes,” said Brianne. “It gave us a keepsake to remember the life we had lost and comfort in knowing we were not alone.

This donation will enable Bears Of Hope to provide support to 140 families with a Bear Of Hope and offer support resources, instantly connecting parents with support, comfort, information, and guidance through creating memories with their baby before they leave hospital. The donation will also enable counselling and a grief workshop to be offered to parents free of charge, and the purchase of a cuddle cot to be donated to a hospital, enabling bereaved families the opportunity to spend more time with their baby without the fear of having them cooled in a traditional mortuary.

“The grief for the loss of a child is very isolating. Bears Of Hope, whose sole purpose is to support grieving families, offered me the outlet to be able to express my feelings without expectations and connect with other families.

“We were so thankful for the support of Bears Of Hope over the years and by nominating them, I hoped the Newcastle Permanent’s staff salary donations would be a means to show this gratitude. The fact that my colleagues have supported my nomination is really humbling and I’m very grateful,” said Brianne.

Toni Watson, Vice President and Co-Founder of Bears Of Hope said that every year in Australia, tens of thousands of parents experience the loss of their precious baby. “This donation will support some of those families through the hardest time of their life. I cannot express my gratitude enough for the staff of Newcastle Permanent’s generosity and support of the work that Bears Of Hope does in the community.”

More information www.newcastlepermanent.com.au/community and www.bearsofhope.org.au

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About Newcastle Permanent Building Society

As a complete financial services provider, Newcastle Permanent offers a genuine alternative to traditional banks for a range of financial services including the day-to-day needs of retail banking customers. Newcastle Permanent employs almost 1,000 staff and services more than 320,000 customers.

A customer-owned banking organisation, Newcastle Permanent has no shareholders to pay so 100% of profits are retained in the business to support our customers and the communities where we operate. We do this through better interest rates, competitive fees, and community support and sponsorship programs.

About the staff CommunityAssist salary donation program

The Newcastle Permanent staff CommunityAssist salary donation program is a voluntary program for all Newcastle Permanent staff. Participants donate money from their fortnightly salary and monies donated, totalling \$60,000 annually. The funds are distributed to four charities or community groups which have been nominated by, and voted for, by staff.

To date, more than \$750,000 has been raised by staff in the 20 years the program has been running, and more than 50 charities and community groups have been recipients of the funds.

About Bears Of Hope

Bears Of Hope provides pregnancy and infant loss support and care for families who experience the loss of their baby or infant. The two key programs offered guide families through their choices when saying Hello or Goodbye to their baby.

Families receive a Bear Of Hope donated by another bereaved family. This allows the donating family to give their child's brief life a purpose and lasting legacy, whilst filling the empty arms of another family as they would out of the hospital without their baby. This bear reinforces that the bereaved family is not alone, and there is an existing community of support. Families also receive extensive information, either in printed or online format, to help them make decisions and memories in hospital, during the memorial, and beyond.

The Bears of Hope *Beyond the Bear* support provides parent-led and psychologist facilitated support groups, private online groups, phone, skype, email and face to face counselling and annual community events that remember individual baby's and recognise their parent's love.

