positive vibes

Your mental health matters



2025 Annual Report











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Message from the Chairman

2025 was a year of significant growth for Positive Vibes Foundation. Across our programs, we welcomed more people, strengthened community partnerships and continued creating opportunities for open conversations about mental health. It has been a privilege to serve as Chairman during a year in which the Foundation's impact has been felt across the Hills community.

The scale of that impact is encouraging. The Hills Women's Shed now records approximately 2,000 attendances each year. Paw Visits volunteers and their dogs connect with aged-care residents through approximately 5,000 interactions annually. Since its inception, the Young Healthy Minds Forum has reached more than 1,500 high school students, with conversations extending into their families, friendships and school communities.

These figures represent far more than participation. Behind every Shed attendance is a woman finding friendship and a welcoming place. Behind every Paw Visit is an older resident sharing a conversation, a memory or a moment of joy. Behind every student attending the Young Healthy Minds Forum is a young person learning that it is safe to speak openly, ask for help and support others.

The Hills Women's Shed has become so popular that we opened an additional day during 2025, with further opening times being considered to meet demand. We also improved the Shed's facilities with new audio-visual equipment, enhancing the delivery of talks, workshops and presentations.

Our growth has been supported by a dedicated management team. During 2025, we consolidated the team with Bob Croft as Chief Marketing Officer, Zahra Shafigh as Administration and Operations Manager, Michael Furcciniti as Youth Social Media Officer, and Queenie Tran as Manager of The Hills Women's Shed. Their contribution helped strengthen our programs and support the Foundation's expansion.

Strong partnerships remain central to our achievements. Castle Hill Rotary Club contributed significantly to the Young Healthy Minds Project, supporting mental-health education for local students. BNI Sydney North West & Penrith also supported the Foundation through its Charity Golf Day, donations and

members volunteering at Bunnings BBQs and Paw Visits. We are grateful to every organisation, business and individual who has supported us.

Looking ahead, we will continue exploring new initiatives and partnerships to increase our reach while maintaining the welcoming, personal approach at the heart of Positive Vibes Foundation. Sustainable growth requires the right people, strong relationships and programs that respond to community needs. Our consolidation work in 2025 places us in a very good position for the next stage of our vision.

My sincere thanks also go to Peter Truong and Queenie Tran for their generosity, dedication and valuable contributions throughout 2025. Their ongoing commitment and support have been greatly appreciated and have helped make a positive difference in our community.

I would also like to express my gratitude to our Board for its guidance and commitment, and to our management team, volunteers, sponsors, donors, community partners and everyone who supported our programs. Your time, generosity and belief in our purpose make this work possible.

As we move into 2026, I am proud of what we have achieved together and excited by the opportunities ahead. Positive Vibes Foundation will continue bringing people together, encouraging honest conversations and helping build a community where mental health matters and no one feels they have to face difficult times alone.

MARIO RODRIGUES

Chairman, Positive Vibes Foundation



Impacts

Behind every program, every event, and every conversation, there are real people whose lives have been touched in ways that cannot always be measured, but are deeply felt.

Over time, we have witnessed quiet transformations – individuals who once felt invisible beginning to feel seen, people who carried their struggles in silence finding the courage to open up, and moments of connection that slowly turned into lasting support systems. These are not instant changes, but gradual shifts that build confidence, trust, and a renewed sense of hope.

Our initiatives have created spaces where people feel safe to be themselves. Spaces where vulnerability is met with understanding, and where no one is judged for what they are going through. In these environments, even the smallest interactions – a conversation, a smile, a shared experience – can have a profound and lasting impact.

We have seen how support extends beyond individuals. Families begin to feel relief knowing they are not alone. Young people start to believe in their own potentials again. Communities grow stronger as empathy replaces stigma, and openness replaces silence.

1. Individuals rediscovering their voice and the confidence to share their experiences
2. Increased emotional resilience through safe and supportive environments
3. Moments of connection turning into ongoing support networks
4. People feeling genuinely seen, heard, and understood without judgement








Financial Highlights

We had a very successful year with increased activities and attendances at our various initiatives, with expenditure very carefully managed and held down resulting in a small Operating Surplus of $129 - effectively a break-even for the year. It is noteworthy that for the second time running, the annual revenue for the Positive Vibes Foundation exceeded $100,000.

With the increased attendances and activities, the level of support resources was increased to include 4 part-time Managers for running The Hills Women's Shed Program, Youth Social Media Management, Marketing, and Administration & Operations. These necessary and invaluable resources cost a total of $41,150.

Rent remains the single highest general expenditure at $10,300. In addition, Positive Vibes Foundation was able to upgrade the Audio-Visual facilities at its Balcombe Heights offices at a cost of $7,000 with a subsidy of $1,500 from the NSW Department of Social Services.

All Positive Vibes Foundation programs remain free-of-charge, and we acknowledge this is made possible through the support of The Hills Shire Council, State government and the Bankstown Sports Club. In total, $14,500 of grant support was received in 2025. We are also grateful for the generous support of kin community organisations, especially the Rotary Clubs of Castle Hill who gave $10,000 from its Run for The Hills Day. Other valuable community support included $6,000 from the BNI Norwest Chapter and $1,500 from Aveo Retirement Homes.

Finally, the largest revenue continues to be from our Annual Gala Fundraiser Dinner. Nearly 200 guests and supporters gathered for a most enjoyable evening of food, entertainment and celebration, and contributed just over $50,000 towards Positive Vibes Foundation programs.

2025 Financial Highlights

Total Gross Revenue
$107,000

Grants & Donations
$40,000

Gala Dinner
$50,000

Key Expenditure



Key Funding Support

Castle Hill Rotary Club	$10,000
BNI Norwest	$6,000
The Hills Shire Council	$3,000
Parramatta High School	$2,200
NSW Department of Social Services	$1,500
Aveo Retirement Homes	$1,500

Fundraising

2025 Gala Dinner

Our flagship fundraising event and a cornerstone of our annual calendar, the Gala Dinner brings together supporters, partners, and community leaders for an evening of celebration and purpose. Beyond the celebratory atmosphere, it plays a critical role in generating essential funds, strengthening relationships, and showcasing the real impact of our work.





Bunnings BBQ

Positive Vibes Foundation was grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Bunnings BBQ fundraisers in 2025, which helped raise much-needed funds to support our charity.

We sincerely thank Bunnings Castle Hill for providing this opportunity and our dedicated volunteers for generously contributing their time and support.

Grants

Support from government bodies and aligned organisations provides a strong foundation for our programs. These grants enable us to plan with confidence, expand our reach, and ensure that our services remain accessible to those who need them most.

Donation

Every donation represents trust, generosity, and belief in what we do.
From individuals to corporate partners, these contributions directly support our initiatives and allow us to continue delivering meaningful and lasting impact within the community.

The Hills Women's Shed

The Hills Women’s Shed offers a warm, safe space where women connect, build friendships and find belonging. Through 2025, it has grown from one weekly gathering into two sessions a week, with 17 to 30 women regularly attending.

Connection is at the heart of the program. Bingo, trivia and monthly birthday celebrations give women reliable rituals, while shared food and laughter make each morning a chance to talk and be heard. Creative sessions like Lentil Art, Crystal Craft and Paint & Sip welcome every skill level, and gentle movement such as Chair Yoga, Tai Chi and Zumba support body and mind.

Learning sits alongside connection. Counsellors Queenie Tran and Susan Smith led workshops on goals, values, stress, resilience and boundaries, all met with engaged discussion. Director Brooke Collins presented on CPR and defibrillators, drawing many practical and thoughtful questions. New audio equipment ensures every voice is heard, and a visit to Aveo Retirement Homes linked learning to the wider community.

The impact is clear. A record 30 women at one Bingo morning prompted the launch of Tuesdays at The Shed on 29th July. Members have volunteered to coordinate a garden project, run workshops and organise a morning tea to raise money for Dolly’s Dream. Their regular messages of thanks show the Shed is meeting a real need for friendship, purpose and belonging.



Young Healthy Minds Forum

The 2025 Young Healthy Minds Forum was held at Santa Sophia Catholic College in The Gables on 6 May 2025. Celebrating its 10th year, the Forum brought together 140 high school students from 10 schools, providing a safe and engaging environment to learn about mental health, hear lived-experience stories and understand where support is available.

Young people face academic expectations, social pressures, relationships and the constant influence of the online world. The Forum gives students the confidence to speak openly about their experiences, recognise when others may be struggling and understand that seeking help is a sign of strength.

This year's lived-experience speaker was Sara Ladomatos, a passionate youth leader in the Hills community, who shared her personal journey with depression and anxiety. Her honest and inspiring story offered valuable insights into managing mental health challenges and encouraged students to seek support when needed. Sara's courage reminded young people that they are not alone and that reaching out for help can make a meaningful difference.

Facilitated by Burn Bright, the forum encouraged students to develop initiatives to improve mental health within their schools. Attendees also participated in a Q&A session with counsellors Queenie Tran and Karen Hanzal from Kellyville Private Hospital, and Jessica Valvason from Santa Sophia Catholic College.

Since its inception, the Young Healthy Minds Forum has reached more than 1,500 high school students. Its impact extends beyond the classroom, encouraging conversations among friends, families and school communities and helping to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

The 2025 Forum was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors and community partners. We are particularly grateful to Castle Hill Rotary Club for its $10,000 contribution to the Young Healthy Minds Project, alongside the support of The Hills Shire Council and Kellyville Private Hospital.

We also thank Santa Sophia Catholic College for hosting the Forum, Sara Ladomatos for sharing her story, and the schools, teachers and volunteers whose contributions helped make the event a success.

Paw Visits

Paw Visits continued to grow during 2025, bringing companionship, conversation and the unmistakable joy of a friendly dog to aged-care residents across our community. Our volunteers and their dogs now take part in approximately 5,000 resident interactions each year.

The program visits aged-care communities in Oatlands, Glenhaven, North Parramatta, Bella Vista, Kellyville and now Winston Hills. Each visit creates an opportunity for residents to connect with an affectionate dog, share stories and enjoy a welcome change in their day. For many residents, the dogs also bring back memories of much-loved pets and family life.

The human connection created during these visits is equally important. Our volunteers take the time to sit, listen and talk with residents. These conversations can help residents feel seen, valued and connected, particularly those who may be experiencing loneliness or limited contact with the wider community. A simple conversation, shared memory or laugh can have a meaningful effect on a person's day and support their mental wellbeing.

The strength of Paw Visits comes from the care and consistency of our volunteers. They give their time generously and ensure each visit is safe, respectful and enjoyable for residents and dogs. Their warmth allows relationships to grow over time and helps aged-care homes create moments of genuine connection for their residents.

We thank every Paw Visits volunteer, each participating dog and the aged-care teams who welcome Positive Vibes Foundation into their homes. Their combined commitment has allowed the program to reach thousands of residents interactions and continue sharing comfort, conversation and connection throughout the Hills and surrounding communities.







Young Healthy Minds – Primary School Pilot Program

In September 2025, Positive Vibes Foundation delivered the pilot of The Inside Project at Excelsior Public School, reaching 75 Year 6 students through an engaging, interactive mental health and wellbeing workshop.

Supported by eight volunteer facilitators, the program created a safe, supportive and age-appropriate environment for students to explore mental health, develop emotional awareness and learn practical strategies to support their own wellbeing and that of others. Students participated in a range of discussions and activities, with the cohort breaking into eight smaller groups at various points throughout the session to encourage participation, connection and discussion.

Empowering Young People Through Mental Health Education

The Inside Project was developed to help young people build a foundational understanding of mental health and wellbeing before the transition to high school. By introducing these concepts early, the program aims to equip students with practical skills they can carry into adolescence and beyond.

The workshop explored six key areas:

- **Understanding Mental Health:** Helping students understand what mental health means, why it matters and how it is an important part of overall health.

- **Recognising Early Warning Signs:** Exploring how to recognise changes in emotions, thoughts and behaviours, and understanding the importance of meeting our basic needs.

- **Understanding the Impacts on Wellbeing:** Identifying how everyday challenges and difficult experiences can affect mental health, while exploring ways to protect and strengthen wellbeing.

- **Building Resilience and Practising Self-Care:** Introducing mindfulness, emotional awareness, the concept of wise mind, healthy coping strategies and practical approaches to self-care.

- **Developing Distress Tolerance:** Equipping students with simple, age-appropriate tools to help manage big feelings safely and navigate challenging situations.

- **Strengthening Support Networks:** Helping students identify trusted people they can turn to for support, map their support networks, explore personal values and understand the importance of mental health first aid.

Through these topics, students were encouraged to recognise their emotions, respond to challenges constructively and understand that seeking help is a positive and important part of looking after their mental health.

The Power of Connection and Conversation

A central component of The Inside Project is creating opportunities for open conversations about mental health in environments where young people feel supported and understood. The use of small-group activities and volunteer facilitators helped provide opportunities for students to engage with the material, share ideas and learn from one another.

The program also reinforced an important message: mental health is something everyone has, and looking after it is a shared responsibility. By normalising conversations about emotions, coping and help-seeking, The Inside Project aims to contribute to a school culture where students feel more confident seeking support and supporting their peers.



Connecting with the community

1 The Hills UPMarket

The Hills UPMarket provides a monthly outreach opportunity for the public to ask questions and access resources and support on mental health matters in a welcoming, non-confronting environment.

The market also provides Positive Vibes Foundation with an opportunity to showcase its work and programs, while connecting with community members interested in volunteering for our Paw Visits program and joining The Hills Women's Shed.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and generous financial contributions that help Positive Vibes Foundation continue its work in the community.

2 Community Events/Talks

Positive Vibes Foundation continued to engage with the local community through mental health talks, networking events and community initiatives throughout 2025.

Our involvement included delivering mental health talks to BNI, participating in Rotary meetings and attending the Norwest Sunrise Rotary Community Connect, which showcases local charities in the Hills.

Positive Vibes Foundation was also represented at the Castle Hill Rotary 60th anniversary dinner, the headspace Open Day through our Paw Visits volunteers, and the annual Hills Winter Sleepout.

These activities provided valuable opportunities to raise awareness of mental health, strengthen community connections and promote the Foundation's programs.

3 Castle Hill Rotary Run for the Hills

Positive Vibes Foundation was very fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries of this event. We had a stall on the day, were represented by runners in several events and volunteered on the day.

Connecting with the community

4 BNI Sydney North West & Penrith

Positive Vibes Foundation has been actively represented at weekly BNI meetings, highlighting the impactful work we are doing in the community. We are very grateful for BNI's generous support through financial contributions, in-kind donations and personal involvement. BNI has supported our Gala Dinner, Run for the Hills team, Charity Golf Day and fundraising BBQs.

5 Clean Up Australia Day

On March 02, 2025 Positive Vibes Foundation joined the Hills Shire Council's Clean Up Australia community clean-up day.

Over the course of the morning, our team spent several hours working together to clean up litter and rubbish from a local park, contributing to a cleaner, safer and more enjoyable environment for the wider community.

Clean Up Australia Day is held on the first Sunday of March each year and brings together individuals, community organisations, businesses and volunteers to take practical action to protect local environments. In The Hills, Council has a strong history of supporting community clean-up activities, with volunteers contributing their time to remove litter from local parks, reserves and waterways.

New Initiatives

Looking Ahead

Building on our achievements in 2026, Positive Vibes Foundation aims to strengthen community engagement through continued environmental volunteering and mental health education.

Following the successful pilot of The Inside Project at Excelsior Public School, involving 75 students and eight volunteer facilitators, Positive Vibes Foundation hopes to expand early mental health education, helping young people build

resilience, confidence and emotional awareness.

We also look forward to welcoming more volunteers, supporters and community members to Clean Up Australia Day 2026, encouraging community connection and positive action.

Together, we can create stronger, healthier and more connected communities — one positive action at a time.

Impact Circle

A forward-looking initiative designed to bring together a committed network of supporters, partners, and community leaders who share a common vision for long-term impact. The Impact Circle focuses on building deeper relationships, encouraging ongoing contributions, and creating a sustainable support system that extends beyond one-off engagement.

Through this initiative, members are invited to play a more active role in shaping the future of our programs, by contributing ideas, resources, and support that help drive meaningful and lasting change. It aims to foster a sense of ownership, shared purpose, and collective responsibility, ensuring that our impact continues to grow in both reach and depth over time.

The Inside Project

A strategic new initiative focused on expanding early intervention within primary school communities. Building on the success of existing programs, this initiative is designed to provide younger students with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to navigate their emotional wellbeing from an early stage.

The program will introduce structured learning experiences that promote self-awareness, resilience, and positive coping strategies, while also supporting educators and schools in creating more emotionally supportive environments.

By working closely with schools, families, and the wider community, the initiative aims to create a holistic support system around each child.

Our Team



Mario Rodrigues
FCA, B Sc (Econ)
Chairman



Albert Seah
Director



Alexia Yazdani
Director



Brooke Collins OAM, MAICD
Director



Jeanette Farrell OAM
Director



Peter Casbolt
Director



Bob Croft
(Qijian Ge)
Fractional CMO



Juanita Ruiz, FRACGP, MB BS, AKC, B Sc, LRSM
Community Liaison Officer



Michael Furcciniti
Youth Social Media Officer



Yeou Ling Wen
The Hills Women's Shed Manager



Zahra Shafigh
Administration and Operations Manager

Our Supporters

Our work would not be possible without the unwavering support of our partners, sponsors, and the broader community who continue to stand alongside us in our mission. From corporate organisations and local businesses to community groups and individual donors, each contribution—no matter the size—plays a vital role in helping us create meaningful and lasting impact.

Behind every program delivered and every life touched, there is a network of people who believe in what we do. Their support is not only financial, but also reflects a shared commitment to improving mental wellbeing and strengthening the sense of connection within our community. Through their generosity, we are able to continue providing safe, inclusive spaces where individuals feel supported, understood, and empowered.

Our supporters enable us to grow beyond limitations. They allow us to expand our reach, introduce new initiatives, and respond to the evolving needs of those we serve. Whether it is through funding, partnerships, volunteering, or simply advocating for our cause, their involvement helps us build a stronger and more sustainable foundation for the future.

We have seen how these partnerships create a ripple effect—where one act of support leads to another, and where communities come together with a shared sense of purpose. Businesses become advocates, individuals become champions, and collective efforts turn into real, measurable change.

More than just contributors, our supporters are an essential part of our story. Their trust, belief, and continued commitment inspire us to keep moving forward, even in challenging times. Together, we are not only supporting individuals—we are shaping a more compassionate, connected, and resilient community for generations to come.

A Special Thank You

We extend our sincere thanks to our valued sponsors and supporters for their generosity and commitment throughout 2025. Your contributions have helped Positive Vibes Foundation continue delivering meaningful programs and making a positive difference in our community.

BNI | BNI Sydney North West & Penrith

Castle Hill Rotary Club

BankstownSports

Aurora Kellyville Private Hospital

BUNNINGS warehouse

aveo

THE HILLS Sydney's Garden Shire

Thank you for helping us make a difference.

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