

# Voices of impact.



**Annual report 2023**  
—163rd edition



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# We are NextSense

We are a not-for-profit organisation supporting people across Australia who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision. Our wide range of experts work with children, adults and their families to educate or create an individual program of care to meet their unique needs.

We've been providing services since 1860 and now deliver Australia's largest cochlear implant program. We are also a world leader in sensory disability research and in providing education to the next generation of experts in our field.

In our 2023 Annual report 'Voices of impact' we celebrate the diverse experiences of our clients and reiterate our commitment to supporting their individual choices. We believe that true partnership means putting client and family goals first so they can realise what's possible on their own terms.





# NextSense. Enhancing lives every day, by redefining what's possible.



## Our purpose

We exist to enhance lives by working with people who have hearing or vision loss, so together we can redefine what's possible.



## Our ambition

As a unified organisation, we lead and influence the field of hearing and vision, through dedication to our services, and advancing research, education, innovation and technology.



## Our values

- **Integrity**  
We make sure our words and actions align
- **Empowerment**  
We own our roles and experiences
- **Community**  
We connect and collaborate
- **Respect**  
We all matter and have different strengths
- **Courage**  
We look and go beyond fear
- **Communication**  
We share and communicate with purpose



## Our focus

- Expand our hearing and vision service offering across Australia
- Expand availability for adult cochlear implant services to meet community need
- Lead innovation and continuously contribute to the fields of hearing and vision
- Incubate best-practice through research, service delivery, professional preparation, and partnerships
- Future-proof the funding landscape and maintain a sustainable business
- Create a people-first culture



# 2023— the year in numbers





# 11,000+

clients supported in 2023

## 7,650+

cochlear implant surgeries performed since 1984

## 5,600+

people supported by our cochlear implant program

## 380+

cochlear implant surgeries performed this year

## 1,000+

adults and children assessed for a cochlear implant

## 600,000+

pages of text produced in alternative formats

## 19

of Australia's top ear, nose and throat surgeons worked with us

## 4,000+

children received diagnostic audiology services

## 500+

children who are blind or have low vision supported

## 1,300+

children supported through our early intervention programs

## 148

children supported by NextSense School and Preschool education services

## 20%

of individual therapy sessions delivered by telepractice

## 2,100+

days of continuing professional education

## 60

continuing professional education events hosted

## 210

students were completing the Master of Disability Studies





# President and Chief Executive message

One of the greatest privileges of leading NextSense is witnessing the daily impact that our wonderful organisation has on so many lives.

Each year, as we continue to build on over 163 years of pioneering work, we're inspired to honour this legacy and advance our organisation in ways that will see this impact continue.

In this year's Annual report, we share highlights from our activities and our outstanding people. And, most

importantly, we share the journeys of our incredible clients and students—whose voices and stories are the best demonstration of the difference we make.

From 75-year-old Denise, who has her life back after receiving a cochlear implant through our leading program, to seven-year-old Charlie, who is thriving at school thanks to a breakthrough moment in his speech therapy that helped everything fall into place—these are the stories that make our work so meaningful.

# Highlights of 2023

At our 60-year-old site in Sydney's North Rocks, we began the work of sorting through and packing up six decades of history, in preparation for the move to our new centre for innovation on the Macquarie University campus.

This North Rocks site means a lot to so many of our people, and we marked the end of this important era in our history with a special staff event, where we shared memories and achievements.

We were also pleased to be able to host a reunion for students and staff of the former Thomas Pattison School (now NextSense School). Seven of the eight principals who led the school were present, as were many former and current families and staff.

So many bonds have been formed at our school and the enduring friendships were on display at this wonderful event. Thomas Pattison School was always more than a place to learn, it has been a supportive and nurturing community for so many—and we are committed to continuing this legacy from our new home at Macquarie Park.

During the year, this construction of our custom-designed centre for innovation at Macquarie made considerable progress. While we hoped to be on-site in 2023, some construction delays pushed our move date into 2024. But we saw our incredible building take shape.

Our new School, Preschool, and Central space—housing our therapy services, administration and support functions—is a warm and welcoming environment designed to promote connection and collaboration.

The building is full of features to help explain sensory conditions and offer unique experiences. We have incorporated a highly specialised design to meet our in-depth acoustic and visual requirements. And we are looking forward to our clients experiencing this custom-designed space. We're also eagerly anticipating our students' experience of their wonderful new classrooms and outdoor learning

areas, with sensory and retreat play areas designed especially for their needs.

Our centre for innovation is much more than a beautiful building, however. It will help us forge new partnerships—both internally and externally—that will advance the fields of hearing and vision loss service delivery and education. We are already energised by the work we will do there in 2024 and beyond.

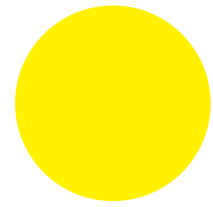
We are fortunate to have received bipartisan federal support for this project. The \$12.5 million we have received from the Australian Government recognises that this is a nationally significant project with an important future role in making Australia a more inclusive place to live, study and work.

And we are so very grateful for the support of those who agreed to lead our ongoing fundraising campaign in 2023 to secure \$25 million towards the cost of our building, enabling us to continue our focus on expanding our services for those who need us.

In 2023 we were delighted to officially open our new centre at Alstonville, in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, thanks to the generous support of the Parramore Family Foundation and the JLDJS Foundation—both of which have supported us for many years.

NextSense has been an important part of this community for more than two decades, but we, like so many others, were impacted by the 2022 floods. Our Lismore premises were destroyed along with many other businesses and homes, and we were forced to pare back our service as we searched for a new location.

As the Northern Rivers' sole cochlear implant and early intervention provider for children and adults with hearing loss, it was imperative for us to return to providing services. Not only did we re-open our doors, we were able to offer something new: easier access to our integrated model of wrap-around hearing care through a new partnership with leading ear, nose and throat surgeon Dr Joshua Jervis-Bardy. Dr Jervis-Bardy, who specialises in complex ear surgeries, now shares our Alstonville premises, and we are able to service clients in both the public and private healthcare systems.



Message from the President and Chief Executive continued

# Unification and harmonisation

**After a decade of growth, including mergers and acquisitions, we have expended considerable effort in recent years to bring our organisation together. This began with us uniting under the NextSense brand so we could more effectively talk about what we offer and who we help.**

Then, we turned our focus inward to our talented people, and considered the steps we needed to take to retain that talent in a market where quality therapists are in huge demand. In 2023, as well as providing access to best practice professional development, we began to build a program that would support the growth of future leaders in our organisation. And we opened a dialogue with our people about their employee experience at NextSense. The many insights we have gleaned from this process will be used to drive continuous improvement, helping us to stay at the forefront of a competitive employment market.

We also continued work begun the previous year to explore ways of working more cohesively together. We rethought our educational structure, establishing new leadership roles and further adapting our education leadership model to improve connection and communication between our teachers and early learning educators. We also created new roles that will enhance our focus on research and evidence-based education.

With input from our people right across our 20 centres, we examined the structures and processes at play in our hearing and vision loss service delivery. We considered how to streamline our operations in ways that are sustainable for the future and ensure our clients always remain at the centre of everything we do. This work is ongoing and will evolve even further after we open our doors at Macquarie and consider growing our services and expanding our footprint.

In 2023 we completed the foundational work required to amend our Act of Parliament to formalise our new organisation name and update our by-laws to better reflect the depth and breadth of the services we offer today. This will be an important milestone in our evolution, in coming together as one, unified organisation, and will set us up to grow into the NextSense of tomorrow.



## Sharing our expertise

We are proud of the many relationships we have built in our sector and beyond, and there are many examples throughout this report of work done in 2023 to enhance our broader impact.

During the year, we also worked cooperatively with state governments to address key issues affecting the delivery of hearing services.

In NSW we, and the expert surgeons in our network, continued discussions with the State Government about the importance of access to cochlear implant surgery, and the need to reduce post-COVID waiting lists by freeing up theatre time in area health services, particularly in regional areas.

And in South Australia, we were invited by the State Government to assist the Women's and Children's Hospital to reassess its paediatric cochlear implant program, offering advice on best practice and reviewing past care. Reflecting on our own practice was an important part of this process, as it was for the field in general, with important conversations being held about profession-wide standards and competencies in audiology.



## Governance

In 2023 the Board continued to build its strategy for the future: to grow in line with the national need for our services; to explore new partnerships; to enhance our physical presence in locations such as Victoria and regional NSW; to build our remote service delivery; and to build our influence and sector leadership.

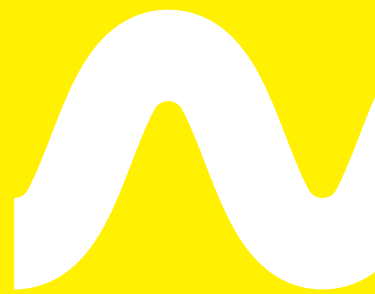
During the year we saw the retirement of Vice President Peter van Dongen and the appointment of Rod Jackson, who brings a wealth of corporate and financial expertise. Mr Jackson has held senior executive positions within financial services, primarily at Westpac Banking Corporation and has already made an important contribution.

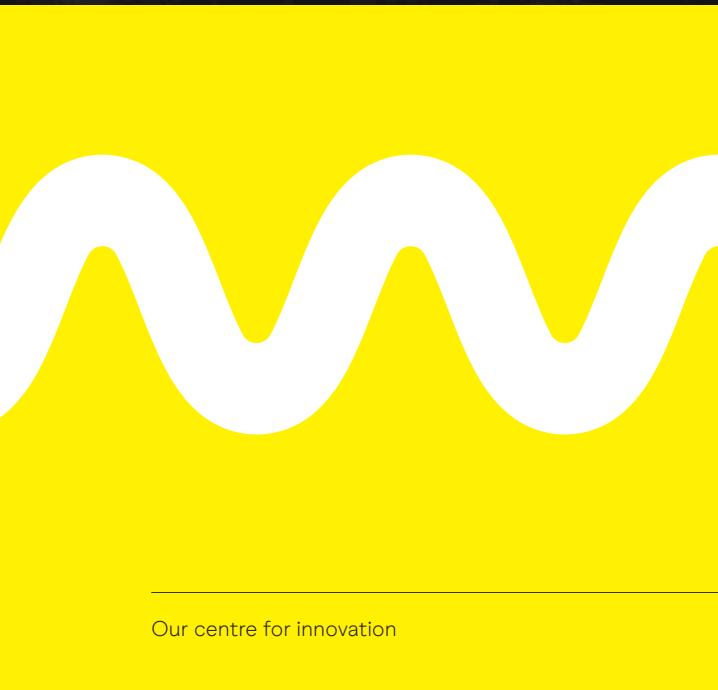
We were deeply saddened to lose legendary broadcaster, journalist and author Sir Michael Parkinson, who died in August, aged 88. Sir Michael was a passionate supporter of NextSense for more than 40 years. He played an important role in raising awareness of our organisation and securing vital funds for our services, including through his role as a NextSense Ambassador. We were so very fortunate to have known him. He was a wonderful supporter and friend.

The gains we have made this year are truly a team effort—we just couldn't do what we do without the efforts of so many. The exemplary leadership of our Board, the unfailing dedication of our people, the ongoing loyalty of our donor community, the collegiality of our partners, and the inspiring efforts of our clients and students as we work with them to meet their goals—all combine to set us up for success. With these pillars in place, we can look ahead with confidence and excitement. We are excited to see what 2024 will bring and we look forward to working with you all as this bright future unfolds.



# Our centre for innovation





Our concept for a world-class facility to advance the field in hearing and vision loss has been years in the making.

Much planning, consideration and collaboration took place before even the first sod was turned on the Macquarie University Wallumattagal campus in 2022.

In 2023, our ideas took shape, and by year's end we really began to see how the potential of our new centre would be realised.

We are eagerly anticipating the opportunities this new centre will bring.

Opportunities to collectively address the challenges facing people with hearing and vision loss in Australia and internationally.

A chance to make a greater leadership contribution to how services and education are delivered, to drive policy conversations, and to bring a valuable service delivery perspective to the table.

Just as importantly, a chance to learn from others, build new research partnerships and industry collaborations, and use these new insights to deliver better outcomes.

There will be opportunities to connect more people with our world-leading cochlear implant program and address the growing need for hearing services.

To improve child and family access to much-needed early intervention services.

To demonstrate what best-practice inclusive education could look like in the future.

We'll build more powerful connections both within and outside our organisation. Better leveraging the rich expertise across our 20 centres will make us stronger, as will connecting more widely to existing and new partners at Macquarie campus and beyond.

We'll do all this from the state-of-the-art physical space that has emerged over the course of the year.

While opening our doors will be a 2024 high point, as we welcome our community inside for services, learning, events, partnership activities and ideas generation, we will remember 2023 as the year that got us there.









# Early intervention

Acting early on hearing and vision loss pays dividends later, helping children meet milestones, reach their goals, participate socially and prepare for school. Our expert early intervention teams provide tailored, ongoing care with family choice at its centre.



## In 2023

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**Professor Greg Leigh, Director of NextSense Institute and Chair of the Australasian Newborn Hearing Screening Committee,** worked with other sector leaders to progress national dialogue on how to best screen children for hearing loss beyond the newborn period.

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**We conducted donor-supported outreach clinics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.** Early results from this work show an increase in the hearing pass rate from 13% in 2020 to 53% in 2023. We also travelled from Alice Springs to the NSW Tablelands, and from Wagga Wagga to the length of the NSW east coast, to provide diagnostic services or cochlear implant support.

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**We joined other hearing providers to advance the Macquarie University Listening and Learning in Aboriginal Children project,** which increases access to early intervention services for Indigenous children at risk of chronic otitis media (glue ear).

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**We developed a new braille assessment tool** that helps professional teams make recommendations about literacy options for children with vision loss so they can access the joys and opportunities that reading brings.

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**Our therapists created two new mentoring packages** for colleagues working with children who are blind or have low vision. One helps speech pathologists tailor their approach to clients with vision loss. The other upskills occupational therapists and NextSense teachers to work as early intervention key workers with children who are blind or have low vision.

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**We created two new Auslan Language Model roles** to work with our therapy staff, role modelling Deaf culture, and helping us maintain our commitment to bilingual and bimodal services for families that choose them.



Photography by Scott Ehler





# Brilliant Amelia is pitch perfect



Eight-year-old Amelia has the rare gift of perfect pitch. Her mum Anita says she can hear any sound and tell you what note it is, with 100% accuracy.

‘She can just bust a song out on the piano after hearing it a few times,’ Anita says. ‘She’s really quite amazing, and is already learning her third musical instrument.’

Amelia, who got her first piano aged only three, also has a rare genetic eye condition called Leber congenital amaurosis, which causes severe vision loss at birth. She is legally blind, with 1% vision.

In an effort to get the best possible support to prepare Amelia for school, her family moved from Brisbane to Sydney, enrolled her in NextSense Preschool’s Blind Low Vision program and sought support from Vision Australia and Guide Dogs NSW.

She is now thriving in her local primary school but is still very connected to NextSense, where she receives a suite of early intervention services that support her development.

Her key worker Lynita is an occupational therapist who helps Amelia reach her independence goals, like getting ready for school in the morning, tying her shoelaces, and orientating around the kitchen.

Speech pathologist Sarah is helping her develop her social communication and eating skills. And access technology consultant Mike is opening new worlds to her. Through sessions with Mike, she has learned how to access her favourite tunes on Spotify and soon will learn how to read e-books from the Kindle app.

Anita is constantly amazed by her spirited and funny daughter. She takes singing and piano lessons, is in the school band, just returned from her first band camp, and is about to try goalball.

Amelia has sung in a choir at the Sydney Opera House, and excels at braille. She’s a Jeans for Genes ambassador and will give anything a go.

‘Amelia will be an amazing pianist one day, or she would make an incredible lawyer. She’s excelling academically, is doing advanced maths and has a phenomenal memory. She can do three things at once. And do them well.’



# Specialised speech therapy a ‘lightbulb moment’ for Charlie

There’s nothing slowing Charlie down. The cheeky seven-year-old from Darwin received his cochlear implants early—aged just six months—after he was diagnosed at birth with profound hearing loss in both ears.

He plays soccer, loves camping and fishing, and has collected numerous awards at school. It’s hard to believe now, but it took Charlie a while to get his speech and language on track. Although he mastered difficult sounds, he had trouble producing others, like ‘k’ and ‘g’.

His NextSense speech pathologist Hannah tried several approaches without success. But she and Charlie didn’t give up. One day they had a lightbulb moment. While practising the ‘skw’ sound using words like ‘squid’ and ‘square’, Charlie gradually took away the ‘s’ and the ‘w’ sounds until he said ‘k’. From there his speech leaped ahead and now he spends more time doing what he loves.

His mum Sinead credits Hannah’s individualised approach to his speech therapy with helping Charlie

to thrive. He and his family are also now learning Auslan and enjoying the adventure of a whole new language.

Speech therapy can be hard work, so Hannah made sure she and Charlie had fun, trying out games and science experiments using different sounds.

‘I explained that our tongue is a muscle, and we have to practice the movement lots of times before we can do it perfectly without thinking, just like when we are learning to do a cartwheel or kick a ball,’ Hannah says.

Sinead says her experience is a lesson for other parents not to lose hope.

‘While there are guidelines and plans, every child is different, and it really helps to have a therapist that can adjust to this. It’s a rollercoaster but the sooner you can access early intervention services, the better the outcome for your child. It’s definitely a team effort.’





# Adult cochlear implantation

**Our whole-of-life approach to hearing services means we can support people regardless of their age or when they first experience hearing loss. We're passionate about addressing the unmet need for cochlear implants among the many older Australians who could benefit.**





## In 2023

### **We worked collaboratively with leading implant providers**

and continued strategic projects with important industry partners including Cochlear Ltd. This work included three clinical trials, including the Cochlear Implant Neurotrophin Gene Therapy trial. This work involves re-growing hearing nerves to make cochlear implant technology even more effective. Other partners include UNSW Sydney, Macquarie University, The University of Sydney, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, and The University of Melbourne.

### **We worked with over 1,000 people on their readiness for cochlear implant surgery**

and increased the number of cochlear implant assessments by 8% compared with 2022 to assist people in their cochlear implant journey and address strong demand and interest.

### **We held 26 Discover Hearing Implant events**

to help 137 potential recipients learn more about what's involved in cochlear implant surgery and rehabilitation, and connect with peers in the same situation.

### **We shared our expertise on running a best-in-class cochlear implant program**

with the South Australian Government as it dealt with concerns over the management of paediatric cochlear implant recipients in that state.

### **We partnered with Google Australia and fellow Australian Hearing Hub partners at Macquarie University**

on research to improve hearing outcomes, including using artificial intelligence to overcome challenges and pave the way for more personalised hearing healthcare.

### **We advocated for greater access to cochlear implant surgery theatre time**

in the public health system to open doors so adults with hearing loss have more opportunities to live healthy, productive lives as they age.



# Colin's early action on hearing loss saved his career

For Canberra environmental consultant Colin Trinder, 64, flying around Asia assessing planning projects and sitting on boards is business as usual. But life could have taken a very different turn if he hadn't acted when he lost his hearing.

'There's no doubt I would have had to quit my career—work would have been impossible,' he says.

Even though it took him some years to get the right combination of a powerful hearing aid in his right ear and a cochlear implant in his left, Colin was proactive in researching his options.

But his is not a typical story. Most people wait an average of nine years before they begin to act on their hearing loss and awareness of options is low. This has long-term consequences. Hearing loss can lead to social isolation, mental health problems, falls, hospitalisation and cognitive decline.

Colin had a head start in understanding how cochlear implants work. As a young public servant in the 1980s he took minutes at a meeting attended by cochlear implant inventor Dr Graeme Clark, who at the time was applying for a research grant to develop the technology.

Now, 40 years later, he's using the device himself to help keep his passion for competitive hockey and adventure trekking alive. He's planning his third trek across the Kokoda Track and will play for Australia at the 2024 Hockey Masters World Cup.

He's also committed to helping others with hearing loss, regularly sharing his own story as a NextSense Discover Hearing Implant volunteer. We assessed Colin for implant suitability, he was implanted in the public hospital system by one of the surgeons in our network, and our audiology team provided post-surgery rehabilitation.

'Today most people would have no idea I wear a cochlear implant,' he says.

'It's as easy as tuning a radio. And there is an extra bonus. I spend a lot of time flying and I don't need to wear headphones to hear the movie—I can stream direct to my cochlear from the plane's entertainment system.'





Champion



# Smooth sailing for Denise as she navigates a new world of sound



Denise has been a dragon boat devotee for nearly 20 years. But as her hearing gradually got worse it became harder and harder to hear when she was out on the water.

Denise is a super-fit 75 and, in her forties, she started losing her hearing from long-term chronic middle ear disease. At first, she had one hearing aid, then two, but eventually her hearing deteriorated to the point where the hearing aids were no longer enough.

‘My hearing over the decades was just ebbing away and I was a bit concerned about the operation, but I realised that I really had nothing to lose because the hearing aids just couldn’t work effectively for me anymore,’ Denise says.

During regattas, when calls on strategy were being made in the boat, she began to need the help of a paddler sitting next to her to repeat instructions. And it was tough when people talked at once or turned their heads away when speaking.

Denise says her feelings on hearing loss were standing in the way of her tackling the issue but credits her supportive family for encouraging the change.

‘I was worried about the look of the cochlears and my granddaughter said straight up it doesn’t matter what it looks like—it’s about you being able to communicate with me.’

Denise’s hesitation is not unusual. According to the World Health Organization, 80% of hearing needs go unmet and the cost of unaddressed hearing loss costs an annual US\$1 trillion across the globe—in Australia it costs AU\$40 billion in financial costs and lost wellbeing.

It has taken a year of practice and adjustment to hear using a cochlear implant, but Denise has made amazing progress with the help of her NextSense audiology team in the Hunter Valley NSW.

‘Now that I am tuned into my new cochlear implants, they have helped me so much that I rarely need someone to relay instructions in the boat. It has been life changing.’



# Well-deserved recognition for leading surgeon Professor Kelvin Kong AM

One of the key features of our leading cochlear implant program is the strong and ongoing partnerships we have built with Australia's leading ear, nose and throat surgeons. Connecting their rich expertise with our quality therapy teams means each of our cochlear implant clients receives wraparound care. Having a dedicated team working together on their behalf leads to great outcomes.

We're so very fortunate to have Professor Kelvin Kong AM as a key member of our surgeon network and were delighted that in 2023 he was named NAIDOC Person of the Year. The NAIDOC Week Awards showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence, and it is wonderful to see this public recognition of Professor Kong's clinical work and his incredible advocacy. His unwavering commitment to equity and welfare also led to recognition in 2024. He received Australian honours as a Member of the Order of Australia General Division (AM) for his contributions.

A Worimi man, Professor Kong qualified as the first Indigenous Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. His practice is on Awabakal and Worimi Country in Newcastle, NSW, specialising in otolaryngology and ear, nose and throat surgery, and he works together with our Broadmeadow team.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children currently experience the highest levels of chronic otitis media (middle ear disease) in the world, with up to 70% of children in remote communities affected. The impacts of this are significant and lifelong, reaching well into adulthood, with resulting hearing

loss contributing to poor education and employment outcomes.

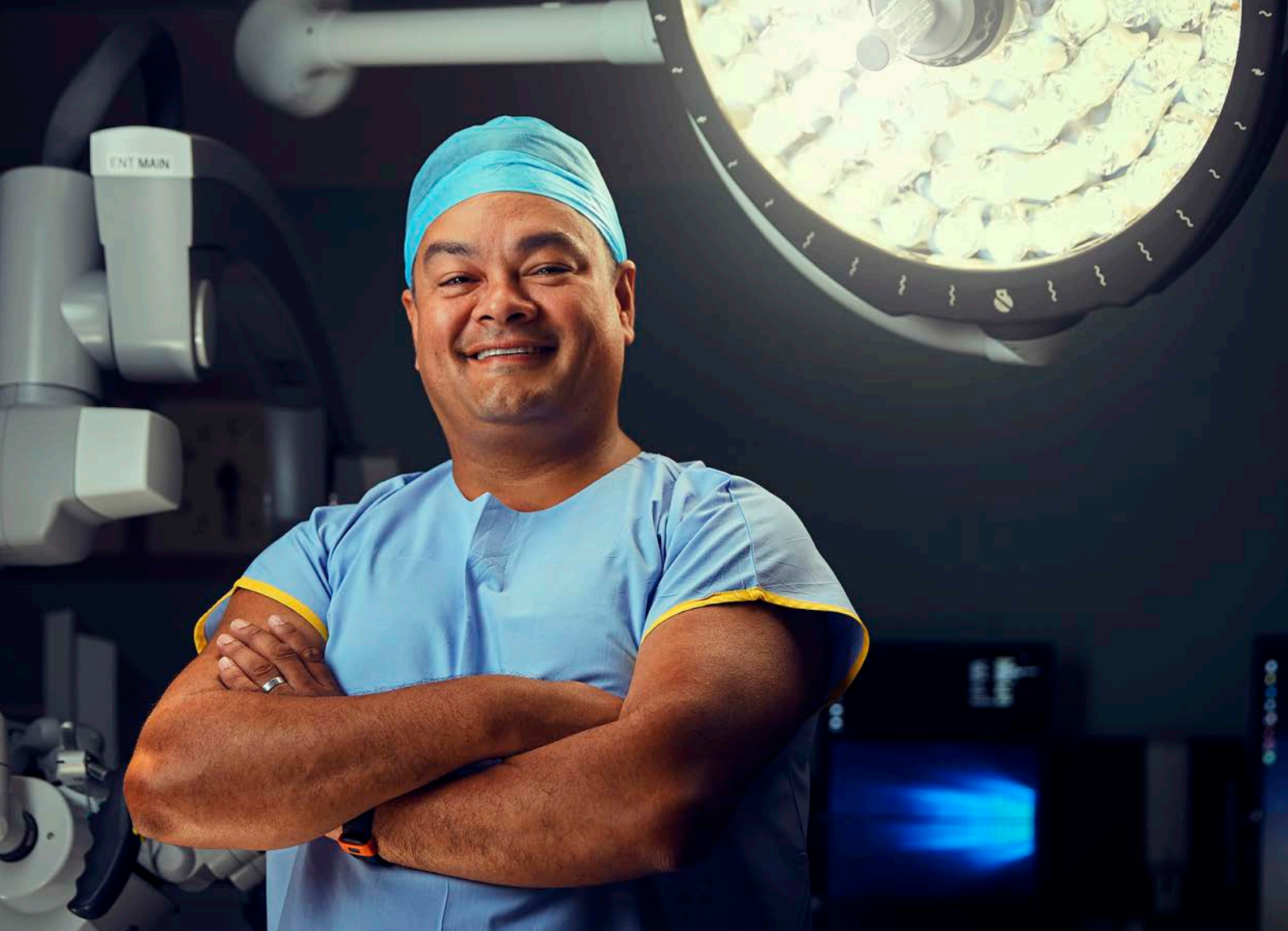
Among his many roles, Professor Kong works with other medical practitioners to empower communities with resources and information about ear health to reduce the risk of ear disease and hearing loss.

In a piece for the journal *Public Health Research & Practice*, Professor Kong shared a powerful story on hearing loss that was very close to home. We share an excerpt here:

'I'll tell you a story about a cute 2-year-old girl presenting with only two words – not speaking much at all. She was falling over, as her balance was dreadful. She wasn't engaging with her brother or sister because she couldn't; and they isolated her because she wasn't talking or playing and couldn't keep up in the playground; her younger sister was meeting milestones at a younger age. Not long after she turned two, grommets were inserted in her ears and her improvement was incredible. Just by removing the fluid – in 2 months she was engaging in conversation with the kids, playing, running, dancing and importantly singing along with the other kids. This was my daughter.

'If we could address these hearing health problems, then we could make better the lives of so many and maybe change the trajectory for the people affected by injustice, incarceration, lack of employment and lack of education.'

Public Health Res Pract. 2021;31(5):e3152126.



## Consulting otologists

Professor Bill Gibson AO  
MBBS, MD (London), FRCS, FRACS

Clinical Professor Catherine Birman OAM  
MBBS, PhD, FRACS, GAICD

Dr Tristan Allsopp  
MBBS, MPhil, FRACS (Otolaryngology)

Dr Daron Cope  
MBBCh, FRACS (ORL-HNS)

Dr Toby Corlette  
BMedSci, MBBS (Hons I), FRACS (ORL-HNS)

Dr Daniel Cox  
FRACS

Dr Graeme Crossland  
MBChB, MRCS, DOHNS, MD, FRCS, FRACS

Associate Professor Melville da Cruz  
MBBS (UWA), MSc (UWA), FRACS  
(OTOLARYNGOLOGY), MD (U. SYDNEY)

Dr Markus Dahm  
MD (RWTH Aachen), PhD (Humboldt U Berlin),  
FRACS (ENT, H&N Surgery)

Associate Professor Robert L Eisenberg  
MBBS, FRACS (ORL-HNS)

Dr Johnson Huang  
MBBS, BSc, MS (ORL), FRACS (ORL-HNS)

Dr Joshua Jarvis-Bardy  
MBBS, PhD, FRACS

Associate Professor Jonathan Kong  
FRACS (ORL-HNS), FRCS, MBBS (Syd), AMusA

Professor Kelvin Kong AM  
BSc, MBBS (UNSW), FRACS (ORL-HNS)

Dr Jennifer Lee  
BSc (Med), MBBS (Hons), MS (ORL), FRACS

Dr Timothy Makeham  
BE, BEc, BM, FRACS

Dr Hemi Patel  
BSc, MSc, DLO, MRCS, FRCS, FRACS

Associate Professor Alexander Saxby  
MB, BChir, MA (Cantab. 1st), FRACS

Dr Joanna Walton  
MBBS, BSc (Med) (Hons), MS, FRACS



# School and Preschool education

Leading the way on best-practice education and early learning services for children with hearing and vision loss has been a core part of our organisation for more than 160 years. The way we deliver education is evolving, and we've streamlined our education leadership model to forge stronger connections between our teachers, early learning educators, and early intervention therapists.





# In 2023

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## We created new leadership roles

in Pedagogy—Literacy, Pedagogy—School Support Services, Partnerships and Community, and Research—Deaf, Hard of Hearing, to bring new benefits. Our leaders will ensure best practice is consistently reviewed, documented and shared, build partnerships with external research teams, and operate as mentors in wider education settings.

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## We supported 148 children

across our in-house preschools and primary school—and in mainstream primary and high school environments through our School Support Services.

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## We saw teachers from NextSense School complete the NextSense Institute Master of Disability Studies program,

enhancing their skills to bring back to the classroom, and more than 20 staff enrolled in training at certificate levels.

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## Our work supporting students in 65 independent schools

saw enrolment growth in NSW, the ACT and Victoria.

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## We unified our School Support Services

hearing and vision teams, increased our collaboration with school staff and deepened understanding in schools of the service we offer and practices around building inclusive school communities.

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## We developed 970 braille, large print, and accessible e-text resources

for young people who are blind or have low vision. This included producing and transcribing 186 HSC trial papers for NSW Catholic school students, braille embossing 178 NAPLAN papers, and translating students' braille answers back to teachers.

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## We worked with the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority

to advise on best practice accessibility standards.

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## We collaborated with author Narelda Joy

in the Australian-first launch of a braille and low vision companion version of a new children's book called *Tassie Rhymes for Little Tigers*.

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## We introduced a new communication tool for families

—our new Compass app—designed to forge closer connections on children's progress, school news, and make school admin easy.

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## We prepared the children for their new School and Preschool

at our Macquarie centre for innovation, catalogued and archived our extensive resources, and donated equipment and resources to a variety of charities including schools in need in Fiji.

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# Axel leaves his training wheels behind

Four-year-old Axel loves his bike. And now that his balance and co-ordination have improved, he doesn't need his training wheels anymore.

His growing confidence and skills are affecting other aspects of his life too. He's confident swimming on his own. He can count beyond 20. And he recognises all the letters of the alphabet and can write his own name.

Axel also has his own 'cheer squad'—made up of his parents Julia and Andrea, and a team of NextSense professionals who are all pulling together to help him reach his goals.

Each member of his NextSense team is invested in Axel's outcomes. His educators at NextSense Preschool are a big support, he has weekly sessions with his speech therapist Alison, and regular visits from his physiotherapist Gemma, who has helped him improve his gross motor skills. He has come such a long way.

Axel's hearing loss was discovered at his newborn hearing screening test when he was just days old. He started early intervention and was wearing hearing aids by seven weeks of age.

After discussing Axel's options with a NextSense speech pathologist and much deliberation, his parents chose to have cochlear implants in both ears for Axel, and had his devices switched-on at our NextSense Waverley centre.

They have also started a fortnightly Auslan class to ensure Axel feels connected to the Deaf community. Already he loves signing and uses the signs he knows frequently.

Axel also has another passion—and that's his preschool. He wasn't too impressed to discover his family was taking him to Hamilton Island while preschool was closed for the holidays.

'Axel's doing so well at preschool,' Julia says. 'He is playing socially and has made two very close friends who have an absolute ball each day developing their creative play with trucks and trains.'

'And it's really wonderful for him having exposure to children who have diverse needs like him at preschool, to develop a sense of belonging and inclusivity, and teachers who really care about helping Axel develop into an independent individual.'



**Watch as Axel accesses  
sound for the first time**





# Sydney teens shoot for the moon at NASA space camp

Steering and landing a simulated space shuttle mission is not something most people would experience in a lifetime. But that's exactly what Sydney teens Ruby and Seth got to do when they attended NASA Space Camp in the United States—tailored specifically for teenagers who are blind or have low vision.

Ruby and Seth (pictured), accompanied by their NextSense School Support teachers Pranitha and Elizabeth, really put their independence skills to the test, pushing themselves physically and mentally. They overcame nerves to successfully complete the course, which included activities such as being harnessed into a space suit and launched into 'space'.

The camp is a scaled down version of the training NASA astronauts do, is coordinated by teachers of students who are blind or have low vision, and is held each year at the US Space and Rocket Center in Alabama.

NextSense teachers Elizabeth and Pranitha worked with their students to encourage them to build their independence and resilience—to feel okay about being outside of their comfort zone, both ahead of the trip and while taking part.

Seth and Ruby have been friends a long time, having met through their mutual interest in music. Now, they have a host of new friends from around the world, with big plans to keep connected.

'Space Camp showed me how independent I can be as a blind person and that I should always try to achieve the most I can,' Ruby says. 'It's good to realise that I can do it on my own.'

Seth says Space Camp was 'really cool': 'We put our minds to work, solving complex problems by using interfaces and control panels on real life models of spaceships. It was pretty good, not one flaw happened when I was in command, so it was a successful mission'.



# Professional education, research and collaboration

As pioneers in sensory disability education, we take great pride in the work we have done and continue to do to educate the next generation of experts in our field. This means collaborating externally to advance knowledge, and drawing on the rich expertise within, to share insights internally.



## In 2023

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### **We enrolled 60 new students in the Master of Disability Studies,**

run in affiliation with Macquarie University, a 5% increase on enrolments since 2022.

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### **We delivered more than 60 continuing professional education online and in-person events**

on a wide range of topics—from using assistive technology for students with vision loss, to sleep strategies for children with sensory disability.

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### **More than 400 people completed either a literacy or mathematics certificate**

through our accessible braille training portal UEBOonline, with 12 people completing our new UEBOonline Exam.

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### **We launched two new certificate courses—**

‘Supporting development of children with sensory disability’ and ‘Supporting clients who are blind or have low vision as a speech pathologist’, with more planned for 2024.

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### **We helped form the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Expert Working Group—**

a joint initiative of the Australian Hearing Hub and the Australasian Newborn Hearing Screening Committee—to harness what we know and make a greater impact to hearing health in the Asia Pacific region. As part of this work, we were involved in hosting a delegation of 20 government officials and senior staff from two Thai universities.

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### **We continued to be in demand as a host of conferences and events**

in the field of sensory disability, including hosting the South Pacific Educators of Vision Impairment (SPEVI) Conference, which had more than 150 participants.

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NextSense

Institute

Next Sense

MACQUARIE University

MACQUARIE University

NextSense Institute





# Sharing knowledge



NextSense Institute Director Professor Greg Leigh and Professorial Fellow Teresa Ching became two of the co-chief investigators leading two major new hearing research projects funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council—on building on newborn hearing screening success and improving access to hearing services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Professors Ching and Leigh were invited to convene a panel at the European Symposium on Paediatric Cochlear Implantation in Rotterdam to discuss what the 10-year findings of the Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment (LOCHI) study can tell us about optimising language outcomes in children with cochlear implants.

NextSense Institute's Dr Sue Silveira was one of the chief investigators on a key research project funded through a highly competitive Australian Research Council Discovery Grant to develop accessible playgrounds for children with vision impairment.

We hosted Dr Rebecca Holt, postdoctoral researcher in the Macquarie University Department of Linguistics, to develop a pilot project investigating language processing speed in children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Through the NextSense Institute we disseminated knowledge through 41 conference presentations, over 37 publications (journals, articles) and 19 editorial review responsibilities.

Professor Teresa Ching led a team of researchers who showed that young children's ability to understand speech in noisy environments was a significant predictor of future language ability. This suggests that working on building skills to perceive speech in noise is just as important as developing early language skills.







# For Rebekah, learning and teaching go hand in hand



Rebekah began her teaching career in a mainstream school. But her special interest in teaching children with disability and a desire to expand her knowledge and skills propelled her towards NextSense School. It was here she realised she could further her professional education at the same time through the NextSense Institute.

In 2023, Rebekah completed her Master of Disability Studies, run in partnership with Macquarie University. And she was in the great position of being able to put into practice all the innovative things she was learning straight away.

‘You can read as much as you like about what children with hearing or vision loss need, but the reality is each child is unique and special,’ Rebekah says. ‘You have to get to know them to teach them what they need to know and get them where they need to go.’

‘I have learned a lot about myself as a teacher, such as how and why I teach, and I implement those changes in the classroom. And while balancing working full-time and studying has been a challenge, I feel so well supported.’

The Master of Disability Studies program provides opportunities for teachers and other professionals to meet the needs of individual learners with sensory disabilities to adapt content and apply specialised instructional techniques to their work.

Rebekah teaches in our Spoken Language program at NextSense School and is also building her knowledge of Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and Deaf culture through weekly classes and communicating with her students.

‘I love the kids and the families that we work with. Our small classes mean we really get to know our students and we work together to achieve the best outcome. I love that I learn something new every day when there is a culture so different to mine. It means I stay interested and engaged and excited about coming to work—and that’s when I do my best teaching.’



# People and operations

**In our 163-year history we've never stood still. We have evolved and adapted to meet community need. The past decade in particular has brought rapid expansion and change. So, this past year, we kept our focus on consolidation, unifying our organisation and our ways of working together. We also continued to build our service offering and our 'people-first' approach to attract the best talent.**



# In 2023

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## **We made substantial progress on our centre for innovation**

on the Macquarie University campus. Due to open in early 2024, our centre will champion collaboration within our organisation and externally, connecting us with key thinkers and doers in hearing and vision loss so we can advance the field and improve outcomes.

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## **We were able to continue our 20-year commitment**

to the people of the Northern Rivers region, opening our new centre at Alstonville after our Lismore premises was destroyed in the 2022 floods.

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## **We developed a new fundraising strategy**

to take us into the future, including a campaign to raise \$25 million to assist in the development of our new purpose-built centre for innovation. We were extremely fortunate to connect with leaders such as Charles P Curran AC, Anthony Sweetman, Lauren Sutton and Claudia Stahl, who helped us build our efforts to reach and connect with the Australian philanthropic community.

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## **We engaged our people in building a new, more holistic approach to our operations,**

with 250 staff participating in workshops designed to chart a way forward to streamline our processes and maximise the experience of our clients.

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## **We invested further in the area of governance,**

with a program of work to enhance our activities and the appointment of an Associate Director of Governance, Risk and Compliance, Neha Sharma.

---

## **We continued our efforts to learn more about our people**

and meet their needs through asking them about their experience of working with us. We explored the best ways to attract and retain staff in a highly competitive employment market. And we increased our focus on learning and career growth, with a newly created role of Head of Organisational Development.

---

## **We celebrated the longstanding contributions of many loyal staff,**

with seven people celebrating work anniversaries of 20 to 25 years, and NextSense Institute Director Professor Greg Leigh reaching 30 years with our organisation.

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## **We saw our people continue to influence on the world stage.**

NextSense lecturer and researcher—and President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment—Dr Frances Gentle addressed 160 member countries at the United Nations in New York on the importance of reaching under-represented groups of people with disabilities.



# Our supporters



Every year NextSense relies on the generous support of our community, partners, and committees to make our work possible.

Despite the current economic environment and cost-of-living pressures, our supporters continued to give generously, and we couldn't be more grateful.

**7,277**

number of donors who gave one or more gifts in 2023

**18,647**

number of donations in 2023 (including bequests)

**\$18,750,714**

value of donations (including bequests)



**We received some significant gifts towards our new centre of innovation and new centre in Alstonville, and we relaunched our corporate volunteering program, ensuring we can continue helping more people with hearing or vision loss reach their personal potential.**

### **Peter's lasting legacy**

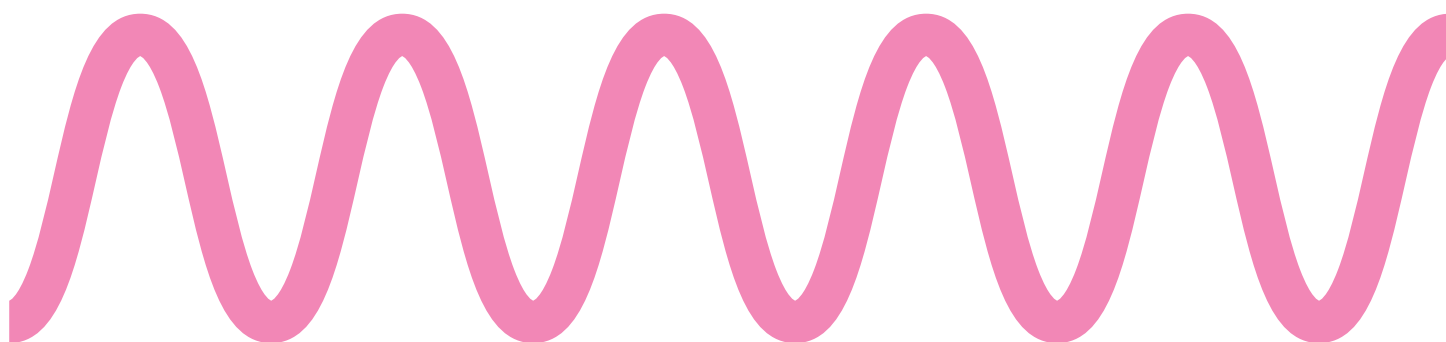
All his life, Peter McTaggart was dedicated to improving the lives of others and bringing beauty to the world through his volunteer work and floristry. When he learned about the work of NextSense over 40 years ago, his life mission became raising funds for people with hearing or vision loss.

Through his involvement with the Lantern Club, to personal donations, we are grateful to have had Peter's support throughout his life. When he passed away, we were invited to honour Peter with a eulogy at his funeral, which our Chief Executive, Chris Rehn, wrote and delivered, highlighting the special relationship between Peter and NextSense. Peter's decision to leave a gift in his Will to NextSense ensures his generosity will have a lasting impact.

### **Corporate supporters give their time**

The daunting task of packing up at North Rocks after 60 years of occupation was eased with the help and support of hundreds of volunteers from organisations like Commonwealth Bank, Pfizer, Optus, AMP, Hyundai, Ampol, Oracle, NAB, Aon, Westpac, Okta, Endeavour Energy, and Mitsubishi Electric.

Many hours were spent sorting, culling, shredding, packing, scanning, and archiving thousands of resources, and we are so grateful to our corporate supporters for giving their people the opportunity to help us. We look forward to seeing you all at our new centre for innovation on the Macquarie University campus.





## Thank you for doubling the impact on Giving Day

Our first-ever Giving Day was an incredible success, thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

Every donation made over a 24-hour period was matched by generous individual and corporate supporters, meaning every dollar had twice the impact. Our \$200,000 fundraising goal was exceeded within a matter of hours, and we raised \$260,000.

A special thanks to our matching partners and donors: Mitsubishi Electric, VivCourt Trading, Corporate Match 2.0, Anton and Jenny Gaudry, The Henson Foundation, Henk and Diane, Jennie Brand-Miller and Qantas Pathfinders.

All funds raised on Giving Day go directly towards NextSense School.

## Qantas Pathfinders Revue goes from strength to strength

After two years of Covid-related cancellations, the annual Qantas Pathfinders Revue made a much-anticipated comeback in 2022, with the talented troupe of Qantas current and former staff returning to the stage to raise funds for NextSense.

But the incredible results of 2023—with record ticket sales and record income—saw this annual event soar to even greater heights.

More than \$198,000 was raised in one of the team's best shows ever. *The Qaronation* was an homage to the new guard at Qantas. And they were even joined in the audience on opening night by incoming CEO Vanessa Hudson.

The 2023 Revue marks 49 years since the first performance, as part of what has become an Australian corporate partnership success story. The dedicated Qantas Pathfinders team has donated almost \$9 million to our organisation over the years and the commitment and hard work they put in each year to produce this unique show is remarkable. We are so very grateful for the longstanding commitment our friends at Pathfinders have made to helping our clients realise what's possible.





## Lantern Clubs: half a century of service

Since the first Lantern Club was founded in 1964, Lantern Clubs have raised more than \$18 million for NextSense.

The Hornsby club alone has raised over \$270,000 through various fundraising activities. The club celebrated the 50th anniversary milestone with a special lunch, attended by over 70 people, including some founding members.

The success and longevity of the Lantern Clubs is due to the commitment of club members, many of whom have left an even larger legacy through a gift in their Will for NextSense over the years.

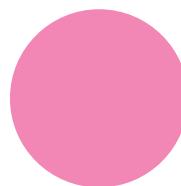
At its peak, there were 56 Lantern Clubs across NSW. We thank the Lantern Clubs for their unwavering support, hard work, and dedication over 50 years of service.



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## A special thank you

The Bruce and Joy Reid Trust 2023 has supported NextSense for 40 consecutive years and has generously given more than \$300,000 since 1984. The regular support of the Trust enables us to consistently deliver for our clients with hearing or vision loss. Thank you!



## Corporate supporters

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## Community and committees

Blacktown City  
Lantern Club  
Blue Mountains  
Lantern Club  
Clifton Hill Lodge No 90  
Goulburn Lantern Club  
Marion Hayes  
Horizon Committee  
Hornsby & District  
Lantern Club  
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Lions Club of Wauchope  
Maitland Lantern Club  
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Rotary Club of Concord  
Rotary Club of Turramurra  
Ryde Lantern Club  
United Grand Lodge of Victoria  
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Milton Ulladulla  
Warringah Lantern Club  
Williamstown North  
Primary School

## Bequests

Jean Austin  
Bonnie Bartle  
Maria Bergen  
Michael Borowy  
Margaret Bowers  
Jocelyn Brown  
William Brown  
Joyce Buckland  
Dorothy Burton  
Elaine Cater  
Lesley Chandler  
Doris Cox  
Francis Cullen  
June D'Arcy  
Adrianus de Lange

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Earl Shephard  
Valerie Steed  
Mary Stephenson  
Raymond Stephenson  
Mary Stewart Collins  
Frederick Strange  
Claudette Taylor  
Phyllis Toy  
Amy Van der Kooi  
Basil Vincent  
David Vowles  
William Walkley  
Warren Watkins  
Coral Whalan  
Beryl Whitton  
Roy Williams  
Sidney Williams  
Doreen Wilson

## Individual supporters

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Ian Sharp  
Alexander L Shaw  
Jagat Sheth  
Carolyn Shih  
Charlie Shuetrim AM and Sandy Shuetrim  
Dr Guy Silberstein  
Margaret Simon  
Joan Skews  
Maureen Stevenson  
Barbara Stone AM  
Helen Swan  
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Graham Todd  
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Janet Wright  
L Yager  
Dr Jason Yeo

## Trusts and Foundations

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JLDJS Foundation  
John James Foundation  
Kathleen Breen Children's Charity Trust  
Kirsten Charity Trust  
Lady Fairfax Charitable Trust  
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Maple-Brown Family Foundation Ltd  
Mutual Assistance Society, Sydney  
Nell & Hermon Slade Trust  
Olsson Property Group Trust Pty Ltd  
Parramore Family Foundation  
Payne Family Charitable Fund  
Sibley Endowment  
Skipper Jacobs Charitable Trust  
The Amelia Eliza Holland Trust  
The Belalberi Foundation Pty Limited  
The Calvert-Jones Foundation  
The Dick and Pip Smith Foundation  
The F M Bradford Endowment  
The Freemasons Public Charitable Foundation  
The Graham and Pam Nock Foundation  
The Hargrove Foundation  
The Hildanna Foundation  
The J & G Bedwell Endowment  
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The R A Gale Foundation  
The Ruth Marie Sampson Foundation  
The Rydge Foundation  
The Yulgilbar Foundation

Victorian Foundation for Promotion of Oral Education of the Deaf

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## Life Members appointed in 2023

Maizie Barakat  
Magda Budzynowska  
George Carla  
Bruce G Dawkins  
Judith de Brazay  
Philip Dempsey  
Paul DeSouza  
John Ealey  
Dr Phillip J Emdler  
Rosa Evans  
Dr Sarah E Flint  
Phyllis Forbes  
Morris H Green  
Igor Hawryszkiewicz  
Tim Hogben  
Lawrie Kupkee  
Rowan H and Paula M Lane  
Jennifer Lavender  
Margaret Leonard  
Mary Loft  
Gladys Lunney  
Judith McAlpine  
Professor Mary McCallum  
Elizabeth and Lloyd McKeand  
Craig McLean  
Elizabeth McWilliam  
Julie McWilliam  
Patricia Peck  
Tom and Robyn Pinzone  
Patricia Pollard  
Michael and Karen Rich  
Ian Sharp  
Robert G Stephenson  
Allan Stevens  
Maureen Stevenson  
Gwenyth and Stewart Wallis AO

## Life Governors as at 31 December 2023

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Richard Bonyng AO CBE  
Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation  
Broadspectrum (Australia) Pty Limited  
Bruce & Joy Reid Trust  
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John Calvert-Jones AM  
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JLDJS Foundation  
Kathleen Breen Children's Charity Trust  
Kumagai Australia Group  
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The Donald Boden Memorial Trust  
The Hildanna Foundation  
The Manildra Foundation  
The Perpetual Foundation  
The Profield Foundation Trust  
The R A Gale Foundation  
The Rydge Foundation  
Victorian Foundation for Promotion of Oral Education of the Deaf  
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation  
Anthony Wales AM and Gai Wales  
Sean Wareing AM  
William Buckland Foundation

## Prescribed Purpose Funds

18th Australian Infantry Brigade of NSW Fund  
Ann Ratcliffe Fund  
Ian Paul Fund  
Ivan Rado Memorial Fund  
Jack and Gwen Freeman Fund  
Japan Australia Friendship Fund  
John B Bedwell Fund  
Joseph Tyrrell Fund  
Robert Simpson and Amy Caroline Brown and Family Fund  
Stan and Betty Graham Bursary Fund for NextSense School Spoken Language Program  
The Estate of the Late Joan Isabel Craven Fund  
Vera Rado Fund  
William and Gladys Judd Memorial Fund  
William H Boydell Fund

# Our Board



From left to right: Rod Jackson, Clinical Professor Catherine Birman OAM, Barbara Stone AM, David Dinte, Matt Pearce, Charles M Cowper and The Hon Robyn Parker

## David Dinte

President  
BEd, LLB, MAICD

David is a property developer with extensive experience in commercial, retail, industrial and residential development, acquisition and management in both Australia and the United States of America. David is a Director of Souths Cares and a member of the International Council of Shopping Centres. David joined the Board in 2000 and was appointed a Vice President in 2009. In December 2019 David was appointed President and Chairman of the Board. He is a Life Member of NextSense.

## Barbara Stone AM

Vice President  
BA, DipEd, MEd, MAICD, FACE, FACEL

Barbara is a former National Chair of the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA), past State Chair AHISA NSW/ACT, former President, Alliance of Girls' Schools of Australasia. Barbara retired as Principal of MLC School in 2011. Current other Board directorships include Association of Independent Schools, NSW. Mrs Stone joined the Board in 2002, was appointed Vice President in 2012 and is a Life Member of NextSense.

## **Matt Pearce**

Vice President

Matt Pearce has an extensive career in media and events. He has worked in newspapers and magazines and, for the last 18 years, events. He has strong mergers and acquisition experience and sits on a number of industry Boards. He has been involved in hearing services in Victoria for the last 25 years, previously serving as Chairman and Board Director for Taralye and Taralye Foundation. Matt joined the Board in 2018 and was appointed a Vice President in 2021.

## **Clinical Professor Catherine Birman OAM**

Director

MBBS, PhD, FRACS, GAICD

Clinical Professor Birman is one of the most experienced cochlear implant surgeons worldwide, having performed almost 2000 cochlear implant procedures for children and adults. An ENT surgeon working in Sydney, Professor Birman was awarded the 2017 NSW Premier's Woman of the Year; in 2018 the Australian Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery (ASOHNS) Society Medal for Distinguished Contribution to the Art and Science of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery; and the Order of Australia Medal in 2022. She has presented and published extensively and is Medical Director of the cochlear implant program at NextSense.

## **Charles M Cowper**

Director

BA, LLB, FAICD

Charles Cowper is a solicitor and former partner of national commercial law firms, Corrs Chambers Westgarth and Gadens Lawyers. He is currently a consultant to global law firm Dentons. He is an acknowledged expert in mergers and acquisitions, corporate law and governance. He has held Board positions in a range of for profit and for purpose organisations including in education, on the Council of Shore School, and in disability, as a director of Royal Blind Society of New South Wales. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Charles joined the Board in May 2017.

## **Rod Jackson**

Director

MBA, BEc, GAICD, FCPA, FFIN

Rod is non-executive director on a range of businesses. Domestically, Rod is a Director of NGM Group, NextSense, FINSIA, Searson Buck Group and Chair of the ODEO Group. Internationally, he has been Chair of Westpac Europe Ltd and is Adviser to Executive Global Network in Singapore. In financial services, Rod worked as an executive at Westpac Banking Corporation for over 40 years, 11 of which were in Asia and Europe. Rod was a CFO or COO for the last 20 years and retired from the role of CFO at Westpac Institutional Bank in January 2021. He joined the Board in 2023.

## **The Hon Robyn Parker**

Director

DipEd, DipTeach, GAICDMs

Robyn Parker has over 30 years of public sector experience. Beginning with roles in child and family services across a number of disadvantaged communities, Robyn spent 14 years as a TAFE teacher of child studies and as a CEO of an ageing and disability organisation. She also spent 12 years as an MLC, MP and Cabinet Minister in the NSW Government. Currently, Robyn serves as a non-executive director of several not-for-profit and government Boards such as Hume Housing and Hunter Local Land Services. She is the Deputy Chair of the NSW Heritage Council. She joined the Board in 2019.

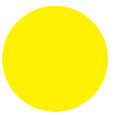


# Our senior leaders



From left to right: David Eljiz, Shy Bastianpillai, Kylie Pearson, Chris Rehn, Arani Duggan, Professor Greg Leigh AO, Nicole Smith, and Hockman Chang

**Senior leadership team as at 31 December 2023**



### **Chris Rehn**

Chief Executive  
JP, BBus, DipAppSc

Chris brings a wealth of health management experience and expertise to NextSense, having held senior roles within a range of public and private sector healthcare organisations. He was appointed Chief Executive in 2010.

### **Shy Bastianpillai**

Chief Financial Officer  
FCPA, FCMA (UK), CGMA

Shy has extensive experience and a proven track record in financial management and business transformation, and is a people-focused leader, with a passion for coaching others. She joined NextSense in 2016 after a series of senior roles in business.

### **Hockman Chang**

Director, Technology, Operations and Property  
B Const Mgt, MRE, Dip App Sc, Cert Risk Mgt

Hockman has extensive experience and expertise in project and program management. Prior to joining NextSense in 2013, he held senior management roles in several ASX Top 50 multinationals across a range of industries.

### **Arani Duggan**

Director, Fundraising and Development  
BDes, MFIA

Arani's 20-year fundraising career includes roles across government, the arts and not-for-profit sectors. She has successfully developed and implemented strategies that have led to increased income and set the foundations for long-term sustainability.

### **David Eljiz**

Chief Operating Officer  
BCom, LLB, GDLP

David Eljiz is an accomplished executive leader with significant experience in service delivery, change management, organisational strategy and operations management. He has held senior leadership roles in the education and legal sectors.

### **Professor Greg Leigh AO**

Director, NextSense Institute  
DipTeach, BEd, MSc, PhD, FACE

Professor Leigh has built an impressive career specialising in education for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. He is well known and respected within the sector and internationally, through his many sector leadership roles and research.

### **Kylie Pearson**

Director, People and Culture  
B ExSc, DipHR

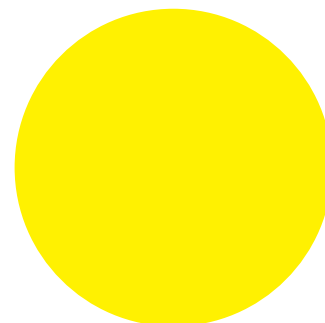
Kylie is a commercially focused HR professional who has held HR roles across multiple industries, including healthcare and children's services, where she had responsibility for large and complex workforces. She joined NextSense in 2020.

### **Nicole Smith**

Director, Marketing and Communications  
BSHM, MBus

Nicole is a senior marketing and communications executive with over 20 years' experience. She has successfully led major organisational change responses, built brand campaigns and marketing initiatives. She joined NextSense in 2015.

- \* At the end of 2023 we welcomed Neha Sharma as our new Associate Director of Governance, Risk and Compliance. As a solicitor, Neha has qualifications in Law and Science (Psychology), over 10 years' experience in the legal industry and has worked in a broad range of fields, most recently as a Partner in a legal practice.



# Financial summary

As we approached the end of the construction phase of our centre for innovation at the Macquarie University campus, 2023 was a year of significant capital expenditure. We also kept a close eye on both revenue and expenditure streams as we transitioned out of the COVID-19 impacted years. Sustainability into the future is a key priority, together with quality outcomes for our clients, for the next 163 years.

Total revenue was \$53.5M, a decrease of \$3.3M or 5.8% from 2022.

Our generous donors and bequestors contributed 35% of our revenue in 2023, compared to 34% the previous year. We are enormously grateful for their foresight and generosity, amidst a challenging fundraising environment and cost-of-living pressures.

Commonwealth and State Governments contributed 7% of our revenue in 2023, fee for service (NDIS and Medicare revenue generated from client activity) contributed 29%.

To assist us with the construction costs of the centre of innovation we were fortunate to receive a generous grant from the Federal Government in 2023.

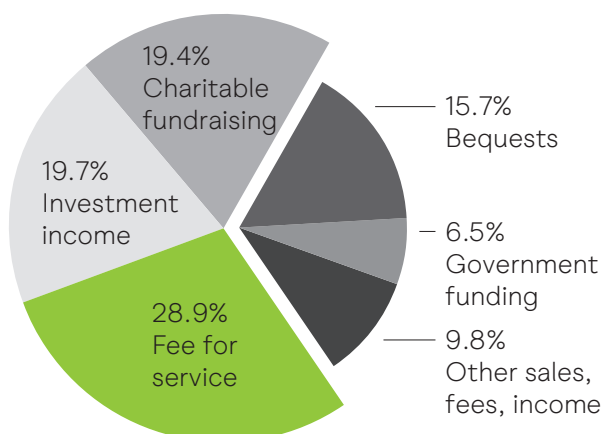
Total expenditure on activities increased by \$1.8M or 3.6% to \$51.7M, with 71% of our outgoings directed towards delivering student and client services, including our cochlear implant services.

General and administration costs were 9.6% of operational expenditure.

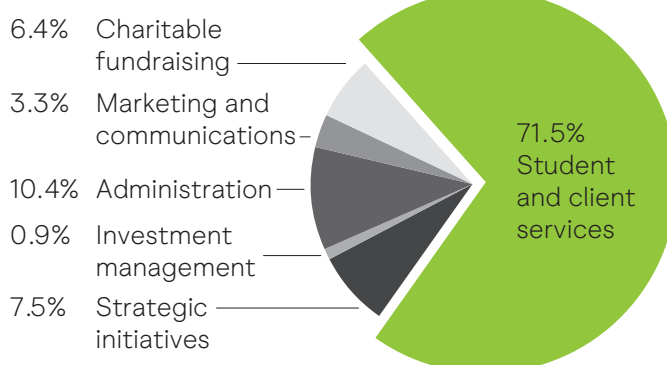
We reported a net surplus of \$104.6M compared to a deficit of \$10.5M in 2022. 2023 included a realised gain of \$95.1M on the sale of the North Rocks property and an unrealised gain of \$7.6M on the restatement of our investment funds compared to a loss of \$16.5M in 2022.

The NextSense Board and leadership team are committed to achieving long term sustainability and delivering on our purpose through diverse activities and solid fiscal management. We are grateful to our donors and funders who continue to contribute towards the work we do for our clients.

## 2023 income



## 2023 expenditure





## 2023 income and expenditure summary

	2023 (\$'000)	2022 (\$'000)	% Change
Total revenue	53,456	56,736	-5.8%
Total expenditure	51,746	49,950	3.6%
Net operating income	1,710	6,786	
Unrealised/realised gains/(loss) on financial and property assets	102,854	(17,269)	
Net (loss) surplus for the year	104,564	(10,482)	

### Auditor

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd

### Banker

St George Bank

### Investment adviser

JANA Investment Advisers

### Solicitors 2023

Bartier Perry

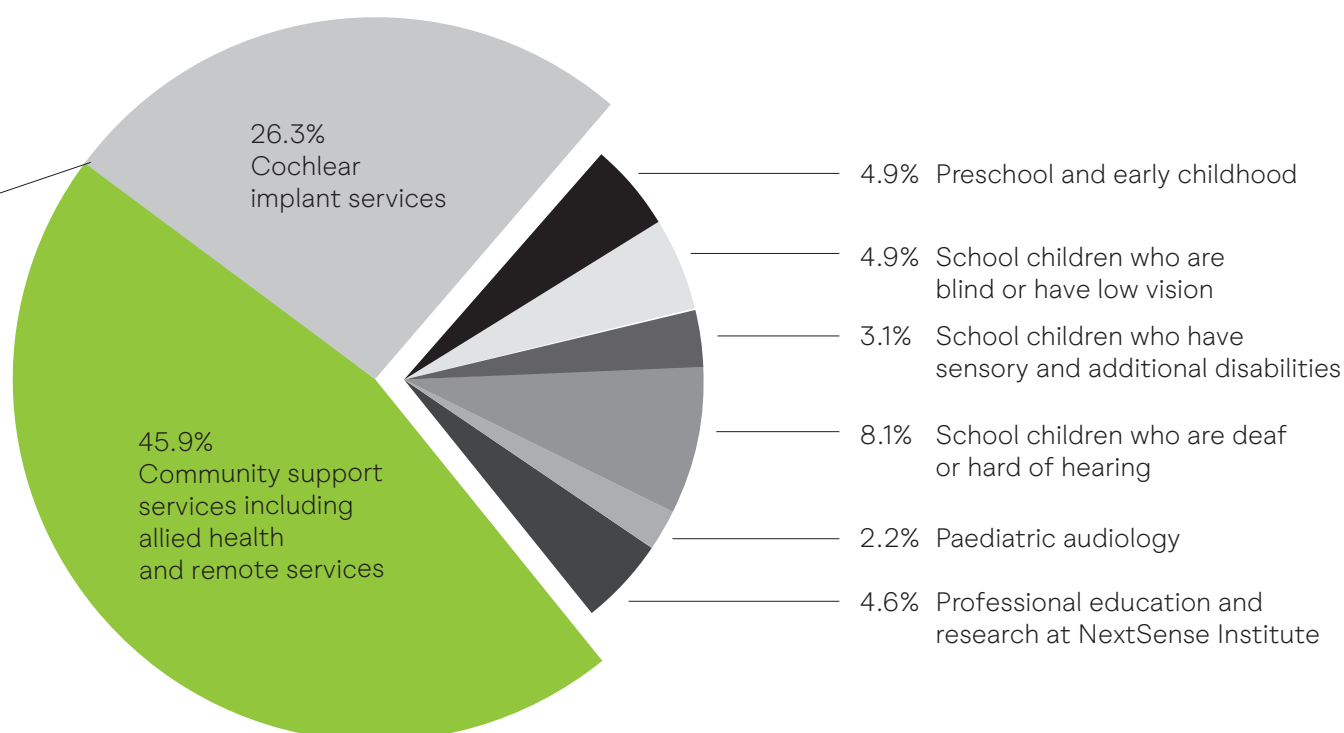
Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Integroe Partners

Meyer Vandenberg

Sparke Helmore Lawyers

## 2023 expenditure: student and client services



# Get involved

**As a registered charity, NextSense relies on the support of the community to help deliver our vital services to those who need us. Here are some ways you can help.**

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## **Make a philanthropic contribution to our future**

Our move to establish a new NextSense best-practice centre for innovation at Macquarie University is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for philanthropists, corporate partners, and governments to invest in a new era of service provision for Australians with hearing or vision loss and their families. We'd be delighted to discuss your personal philanthropic goals and tailor an opportunity for you to make an impact.

## **Make a donation or become a regular giver**

Your gift, large or small, supports the ongoing delivery of services that help redefine what's possible for children and adults with hearing or vision loss, and their families.

## **Leave a lasting legacy**

Funds donated through leaving a kind-hearted gift in your Will, or through trusts, foundations, or permanent funds, continue to support future generations of children with hearing or vision loss.

## **Create a strategic corporate partnership**

Talk to us about becoming a NextSense corporate partner and how your organisation and staff can make a difference, while building staff and customer engagement at the same time.

## **Become a community fundraiser**

There are all sorts of ways you can fundraise to support NextSense, your imagination is the limit. Create or join a fundraiser to help Australians with hearing or vision loss access the services they need to reach their full potential.

## **Join a fundraising committee**

Raise funds for children and adults with hearing or vision loss, and their families, and support our community through fun social events and activities.

Get in touch with our friendly fundraising team to find out more about how you can make a difference.



**1800 043 411**



