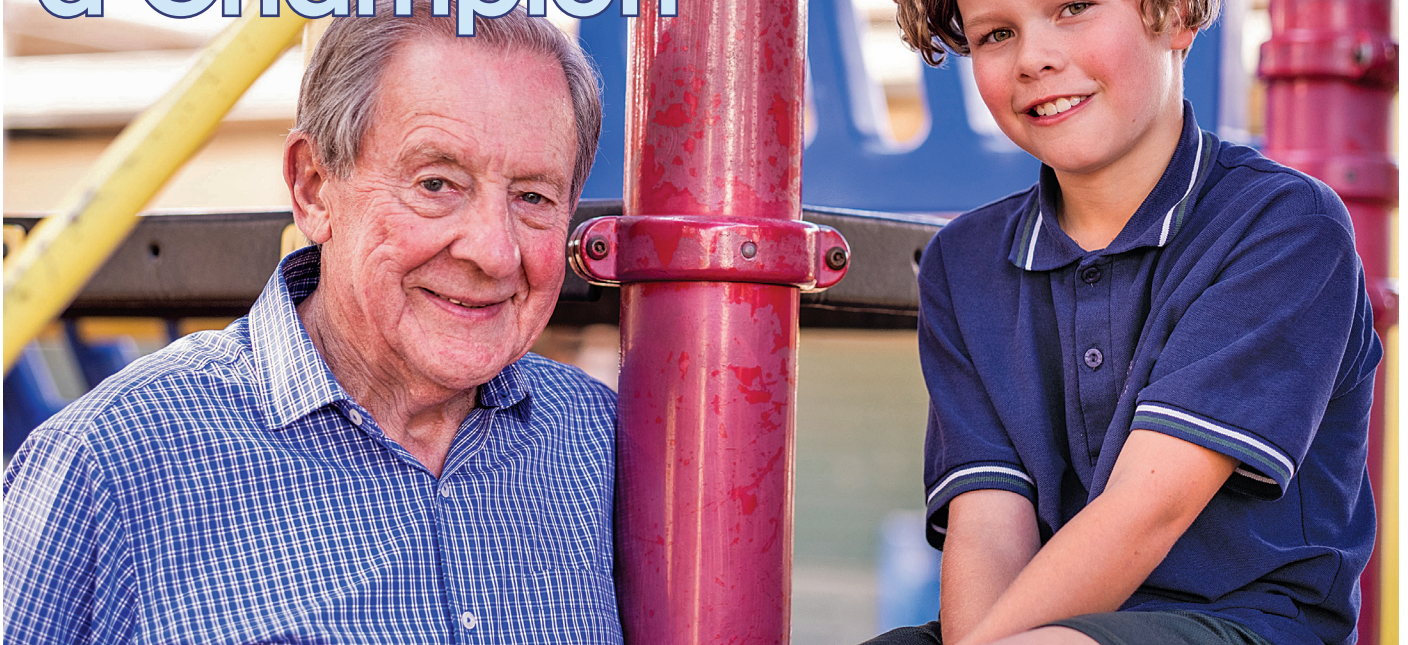


# Every Child Needs a Champion



**L**IFE was not easy growing up – I had 10 sisters and for a while we lived in public housing and survived on government benefits.

When I was in primary school, I met Stan. Stan was my mentor, Stan was my champion, Stan was my dear friend for nearly 30 years. A few years ago, I was honoured to give the eulogy at his funeral and express just what he meant to me.

If it wasn't for Stan, I may never have gone on to be National Junior Athletics champion, I may never have gone on to university, I may never have become a member of the Victorian Parliament and more importantly I may never have gone on to mentor a young boy with Kids Hope.

I had someone to encourage me, someone to support me as I pursued my dreams and someone to pick me up when I failed. I had a champion.

All children desperately need a champion in their lives to bring them unconditional love and hope and that's where Kids Hope comes in.

Kids Hope comes alongside children early in life, preparing lives now, so they won't need repairing later. We aim to give children the life skills they need through the support and consistent presence of a mentor – their very own champion.

Since 2004 Kids Hope has facilitated over 20 000 mentoring relationships, providing over 20 000 champions, impacting over 20 000 children who, through care and support, have seen their lives transformed and now experience increased confidence, resilience and joy.

We know that these mentors can make a huge difference in the life of a young child just one hour

at a time. Research from both Monash and Griffith Universities demonstrates that Kids Hope mentoring has a significant impact.

The powerful one-to-one model positively impacts children as emotional and social development needs are met and learning capacity enhanced. High-quality training, structures and child-safe processes have flow-on benefits to mentors, classrooms, schools, families and communities.

Our vision is to see Hope in the life of every child and our model is simple... One Child, One Mentor, One Hour a week.

Kids Hope is Australia's largest early intervention, school-based mentoring program and operates in a number of primary schools locally. This year, due to the restrictions, we have introduced a number of changes to our program, including our Pen Pal program and online mentoring, but we continue to provide the one-to-one mentoring relationship for vulnerable children that they so desperately need.

With the number of disadvantaged Australian children set to double due to Covid, the need is now greater than ever. **For less than \$1 a day you can be a champion to a child. And for just over \$8 a day you can be a champion to an entire school.**

To find out more visit [www.kidshope.org.au](http://www.kidshope.org.au) or email [graham@kidshope.org.au](mailto:graham@kidshope.org.au)

GRAHAM WATT

*Graham Watt is the Partnership Manager at Kids Hope and the former Member for Burwood in the Victorian Parliament.*