



Growing up I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience a quality education and recognise my potential as an athlete. With opportunities and the right support, I was able to fulfill my dream of achieving Olympic gold.

After I retired from running, I realised that I could use my profile to highlight an issue that I am passionate about and that is Indigenous achievement.

I am inspired by my own experiences in life and strongly believe that all Australian children deserve the chance to learn, explore their talents and fulfill their dreams. This was the driving force that brought the Cathy Freeman Foundation to life in 2007.

Today I am so proud that through the generosity of our supporters we are changing lives. Offering children the chance to learn, the opportunity to be educated and chase their dreams is truly a wonderful thing.

I love hearing the children talk about what they want to be when they grow up with a look of excitement and hope. They want to go to school and learn knowing they are getting the support and tools they need.

Through focusing on the children's lives we are also having a positive impact on the community. This is the first generation of Indigenous children to have full access to education opportunities and we must continue to work together to ensure each Australian child continues on a positive pathway.

Cathy Freeman





Our purpose is to close the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and provide pathways to a brighter future.

Meeting a child's educational needs involves their teachers, their parents and the community as a whole. Everyone recognises what a positive influence this could have for the next generation.

Unfortunately today there is still a significant gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education outcomes.

The latest Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report indicates that only **76% of Year 5 Indigenous students achieved at or above national minimum standards of reading, compared to 93.6% for their non-Indigenous peers.** These figures are significantly lower for students living in remote areas with **only 20.3% of Indigenous**

students achieving at or above national minimum standards of reading compared to 86.5% for non-Indigenous students.

The work of the Cathy Freeman Foundation (CFF) is focussed on and committed to giving Australian Indigenous children a brighter future through education.

Using education based programs created in consultation with community including schools, council, parents and carers, **CFF is having a positive impact on the education outcomes of over 600 young Indigenous Australians annually.**

Education is the basis for making informed choices and getting a job. Education is the starting block that gives our young people the tools to build a better life.



In the Closing the Gap Prime Minister's 2013 Report, the Cathy Freeman Foundation was acknowledged for **successfully engaging Indigenous children in school.**

Working in partnership with the Palm Island schools and community, CFF is having a positive impact on education outcomes of Palm Island students. Year 9 – Year 12 enrolments have increased three times since 2011. Between 2011 – 2013, Year 12 enrolments have increased seven fold.

CFF's five integrated programs aim to create positive academic outcomes with a focus on increasing literacy, attendance, work ethic and classroom behaviour. **The programs work with children in the early years of learning from age three and continue to provide support right through to the completion of Year 12.**

Since it was established in 2007, CFF's work has focused on Palm Island, **one of the largest remote Indigenous communities and the fourth most disadvantaged community in Australia.** Palm Island is located 68km north of Townsville in far north Queensland.

CFF partners with other charitable organisations in some aspects of program delivery to combine expertise and to minimise duplication of resources in the charitable sector.







'The Community are very grateful and honoured to have Cathy Freeman Foundation giving support and assistance to our children. You all have contributed in many ways that cannot be put into words. Not only has our truancy levels lowered but their willingness to attend school and learn has risen dramatically. They are very smart kids indeed, the foundation has given them a reason to attend school and learning is a bonus so thank you all again. The foundation brings out a lot of pride, confidence, and self-esteem/worth in our child.'

Palm Island parent

A 24% increase in students achieving 90% or above school attendance Starting Block Program benchmark was recorded in 2012.

Since the Starting Block Program commenced in 2008, **CFF has awarded 2300 certificates and awards for achievement in attendance, literacy and classroom behaviour.**

Working in partnership with the Palm Island schools and community, the Starting Block Program works within the school curriculum to support and **encourage students to achieve positive education outcomes.** Through the provision of tangible resources that monitor progress, students are given clear definable goals and are rewarded for achieving key milestones in literacy,

school attendance, and classroom behaviour.

Starting Block Award ceremonies are held at the end of each term where students who reach these key milestones are publicly acknowledged and rewarded to encourage further self-improvement and academic progress.

The Starting Block Program was acknowledged in the Federal Government 2011 Key Indicator's Report on Indigenous Disadvantage as **"a program that works"** to successfully increase school attendance rates.

'I've seen a lot of changes in my fifty five years on Palm Island. Back in my day, life and education were very restricted. There were little opportunities for children to nurture their talents and pursue their education.'

I see the importance of education for our kids, giving them that stepping stone. That's why my role at the Cathy Freeman Foundation is so important to me. Because I can give back to the community and support our local kids to have the opportunities that every child deserves.'

Daphne Lawrence, CFF Programs Coordinator and Palm Island local

To implement the programs from a grassroots level, CFF employs two full time local Palm Island community members. These positions not only support the programs on the ground, but **also create jobs in the community and reinforce CFF's commitment to Palm Island.** They are also considered to be essential to the outcome of CFF's programs and integral for community engagement and program delivery.







'When I grow up I want to be a mechanic.'

Eduard, Year 7

100% of students increased their school attendance in the term prior to attending a CFF Horizons Program Camp in 2012.

Building on the Starting Block Program, **the Horizons Program encourages positive education** outcomes and recognises achievement by rewarding interstate camps to students based on merit, attitude and a demonstrated desire to achieve.

Students who show high achievement or improvement in the Starting Block Program **are rewarded with the opportunity to participate** in the Horizons Program.

Core to the program is encouraging and guiding students on their future education and career pathway, whilst promoting self-esteem, confidence and social skills.

The program is designed to expose students to diverse possibilities and opportunities. Each camp includes interactive

career workshops, mentoring sessions, corporate engagement visits and workshops with well-respected role-models from the Indigenous community.

Currently, the program offers **a camp to Sydney and two camps to Victoria** including a trip to Melbourne and another to the snow fields of Mount Buller.

Key to the successful delivery of the Horizons Program is working with our **wonderful partners at Cottage by the Sea in Victoria and the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Sydney.**

The number of students who participated in the CFF Horizons Program and who had the opportunity to participate because of their **academic achievement increased by 127% in 2012.**

'These popular sporting activities are the program's hook to get children to attend school. Like any other children, Palm Island children are excited about sports and activities. They know if they come to school, they get to play - and we know that if they come to school, they get to learn.'

Daphne Lawrence, Programs Coordinator for the CFF

In 2012, the CFF Activities Program participation rates increased by 50%.

The Activities Program promotes school achievement and attendance, **healthy living and sociable behaviour by encouraging children to participate in regular structured sporting activities**. Activities under this program include netball, rugby, Australian rules football and boxing.

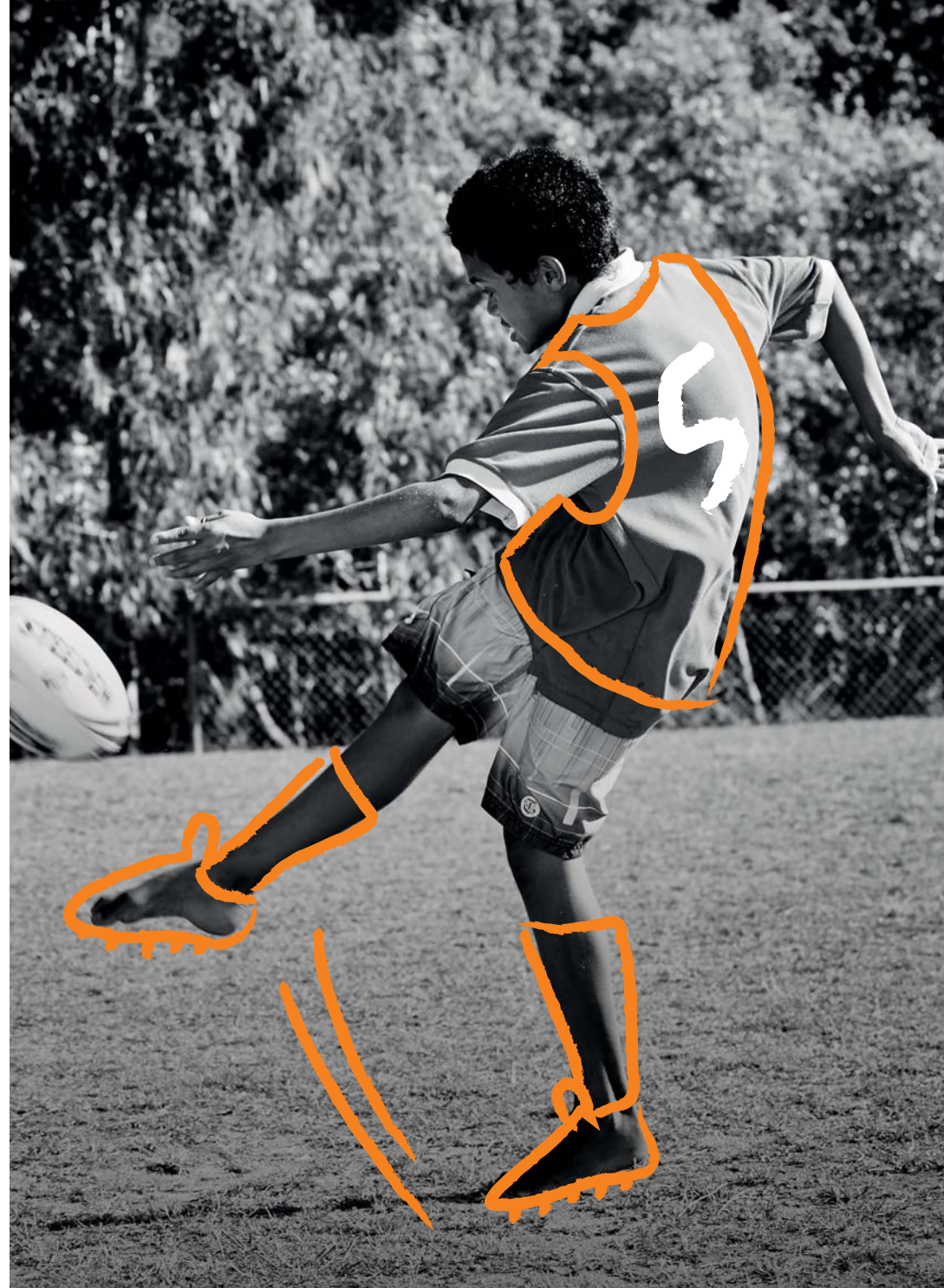
As with many disadvantaged communities, regular school attendance is one of the major barriers faced by Palm Island schools to achieving positive education outcomes. **Truancy rates can be as high as 55% and it is estimated that approximately 50% of school-aged children living on Palm Island do not attend school regularly**. By tackling attendance issues using popular sports, the program aims to increase positive academic outcomes.

One component of this program works to re-engage children who have fallen out of the school system by giving them the opportunity **to participate in activities and engage in a positive social environment, inspiring them to go back to school**.

Training sessions, competitions and tournaments form part of the Activities Program and involve the broader community by encouraging community members to get involved.

CFF doubled the number of sporting activities being provided to Palm Island students in 2012.

In 2011, the Queensland Department of Communities published a case study highlighting the CFF Netball Challenge as a program that showed great community outcomes and engagement.



'My parents were really supportive of me getting a scholarship. It has helped by giving me extra support in school - we have tutoring in the morning, lunch and after school. We also have an Indigenous liaison officer that looks after us and makes sure we are staying on top of everything.'

Moewaiya, Year 11 CFF Scholarship Student

16

students on full scholarships to private boarding schools in Townsville and Brisbane from 2009 – 2012.

In partnership with the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF), this program provides scholarships to Palm Island children to attend private boarding schools on the mainland. Unlike scholarships that require academic or sporting excellence, this scholarship is unique as it is open to any child that shows a desire to learn and achieve.

As well as supporting schools on Palm Island, **CFF supports the education choice of those students and families who decide**

to be schooled off the island.

Moewaiya, who is in Year 11, participated in the annual AIEF Leadership Program and attended the AIEF Leadership Conference in Sydney this year. When she is older, **Moewaiya plans on becoming a physiotherapist and returning to Palm Island to work.**



'Nazareth, sometimes known as the Pied Piper of Reading, set up a reading space with a mat and books. Parents and children responded well to this informal setting. Parents were looking at books with the children and interacting with Nazareth. Parents are now approaching her for advice on how to help their children with their reading.'

Early Learning Project Report

In partnership with the **Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation (ALNF)**, the **Early Learning Project** focuses on improving the literacy rates of **Palm Island children** by providing accredited training to parents, carers and community members to assist children in the early years of learning.

80% of Palm Island children suffer from the middle-ear infection called otitis media, which causes mild to moderate, permanent hearing loss. The disease severely hinders a child's hearing and language development in the early years of learning.

This program addresses the **importance and effectiveness of early intervention to prepare children for reading and writing** in the early schooling years. By working with teachers, parents and carers, it is designed to help prepare children for success in the classroom, which in turn sets them up for success in life.

In 2012, 88% of Pre-Prep to Year 3 students showed an increase in early years literacy levels.

Nazareth Youngblutt is the CFF Community Liaison Officer with a focus on early childhood learning. Recognising the key role parents and carers have in a child's education outcomes, **an important factor in all CFF programs is parental engagement.** Through Nazareth's community outreach role, CFF provides families with support by visiting their homes and conducting educational workshops.

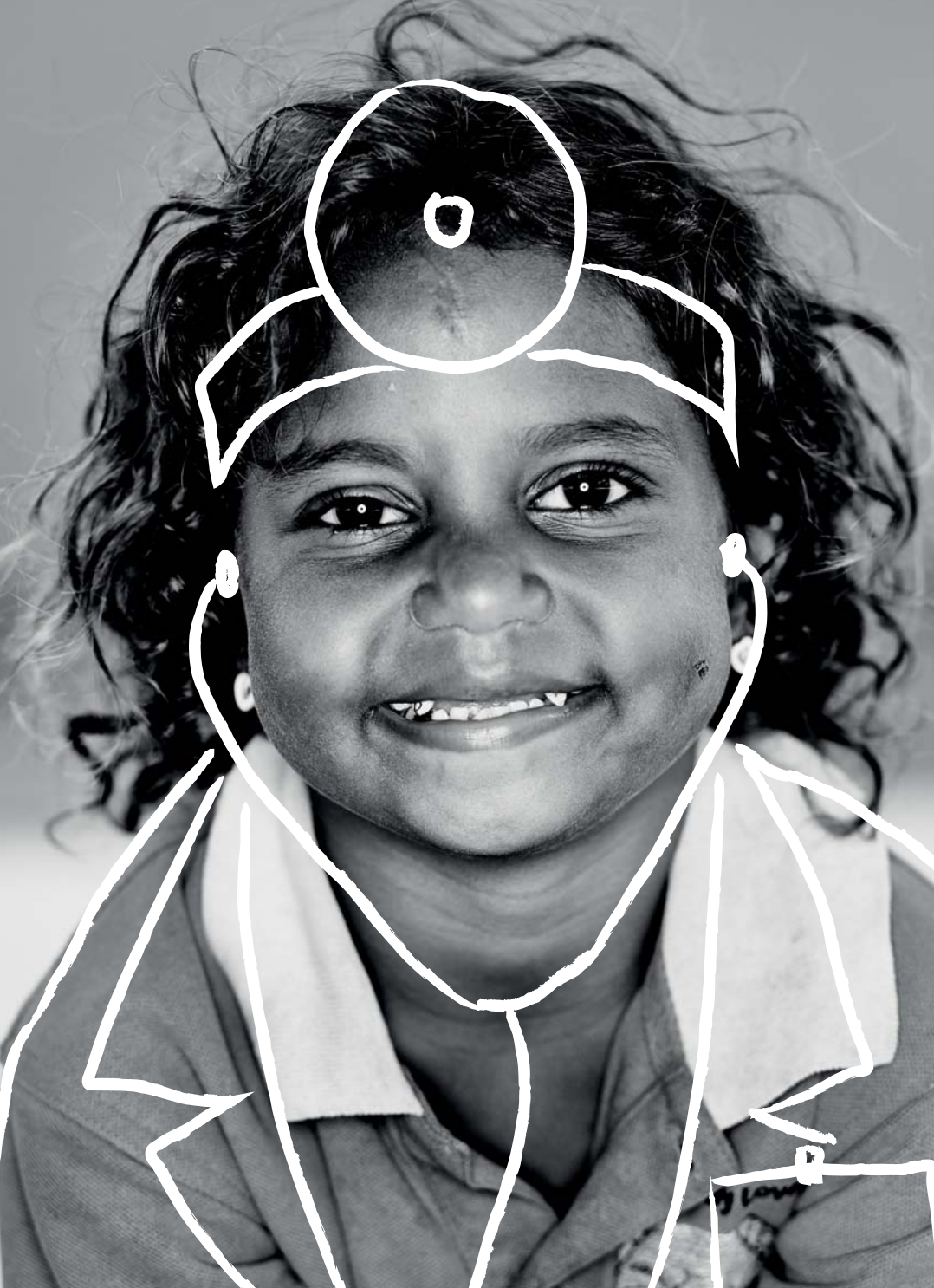
In 2012, Nazareth completed over **100 community outreach visits and visited over 250 parents.**

11 Indigenous Education Assistants have completed coursework towards a Certificate IV (Literacy) Qualification.

Over 3000 books and 500 literacy packs were distributed to homes throughout the community.

88%

of Pre-Prep to Year 3 students showed an increase in early years literacy levels.



'Through Cathy Freeman Foundation work, I have learnt that the only true way to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the educational pathways for Indigenous communities is by all community members working together in close partnership with a common goal.'

Cathy Freeman

Community engagement is a vital component attributing to the positive impact of CFF programs. This can only be done via direct and continual community consultation and ensuring trust is the key element in every aspect of our work. **The Cathy Freeman Foundation meets quarterly with the Palm Island Community Consultation Group (PICCG).**

The PICCG is a group of key community stakeholders including parents and carers, teachers and council members brought together by CFF to ensure program delivery is driven by the community and based on community needs.

Thanks to our supporters we have achieved some remarkable **highlights** in 2012/2013.

Over **800 academic awards** of achievement in literacy, attendance and good behaviour were given to over 600 young Indigenous students from Palm Island.

100% of students increased their school attendance prior to attending a Horizons camp.

Year 12 enrolments increased seven fold between 2011 - 2013.

In February 2013, the Cathy Freeman Foundation was **acknowledged for successfully engaging** Indigenous children in school in the Closing the Gap Prime Minister's 2013 Report.

Our local Palm Island staff carried out over **100 community outreach visits & distributed over 3000 books and 500 Literacy Packs** to homes throughout the community.

88% of Pre-Prep to Year 3 students showed an increase in early years literacy levels.

More than **100 wonderful people volunteered** their time and talent to our cause.

CFF held **over 11 community events, six fundraising events** and took part in **five marathons and one leg of the Tour de France**.

Over **1200 people** ran **20,000km** and cycled **152km** to raise **\$144,000** across Gold Coast, Central Australia, Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and France.

In 2012 a successful corporate partnership with global financial institution, Credit Suisse, was formed in support of the **Horizons Program**. Not only has the partnership contributed to the positive education outcomes of Palm Island children, **it has also been successful in implementing a new staff volunteer program**. Over **200 Credit Suisse staff gave up their time and skills to volunteer** at various events and activities. We are excited to enter into a **third year of partnership** with Credit Suisse in 2014.

16 students on full scholarships to private boarding schools in Townsville and Brisbane from 2009 – 2013.

'I am 57 years old and spend over a hundred hours each year fundraising to support the Cathy Freeman Foundation. The opportunity to visit Palm Island really brought home to me that my efforts are a vital investment in the future of these delightful island children who are disadvantaged through circumstances beyond their control. I would urge everyone who can find some spare time to consider volunteering or donating to the Cathy Freeman Foundation. You get such a buzz from knowing you are making a huge difference in someone else's life. There is no better reward.'

Heidi, dedicated CFF volunteer

Access to quality education opportunities can improve the outlook for Indigenous children and lay the foundations for a healthy and productive future.

In 2012/2013, more than 100 wonderful people volunteered their time and talent to the CFF cause. Volunteers are special people who dedicate many hours by providing support where needed. Volunteering can include tin-rattling, lending a helping hand at one of our fundraising events or supporting us with our program work on Palm Island.

CFF is very lucky to have such amazing volunteers who commit themselves year on year. **They are enthusiastic, talented, generous and have a genuine desire to help close the education gap** between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian children.
Cheers to our volunteers!







'I just wanted to write and say thank you for allowing me to be a part of fundraising for your charity. Not having done any fundraising running events before I wasn't sure what to expect, but I found your organisation incredibly well organised and supportive - from emails congratulating us on joining (and finishing) to packs with t-shirt and personalised message, and a well-structured and inspiring website. Massive respect for your work in enhancing the education of the kids on Palm Island. I'm proud to have been a part of the effort.'

Rob, Hobart Marathon

1200

people ran 20,000km and cycled 152km to raise \$144,000 in FY 2013.

Through various sporting events across Australia and indeed the world - **Melbourne Marathon, City2Surf (Sydney), Gold Coast Airport Marathon, Australian Outback Marathon, Hobart Marathon and one leg of the world famous Tour de France** - around 1200 committed individuals dedicated their time and effort into training and fundraising in support of Indigenous education. **The power of a group of people all advocating for the same cause cannot be underestimated.** We thank you for your passion and dedication.

Thank you

Our supporters are the lifeline of this organisation. Without the necessary funding and support to deliver our programs, the positive outcomes that have been achieved in the last 12 months would not have been possible. Our supporters consist of program partners, corporate partners, individual donors, regular donors, Trusts & Foundations and people from all walks of life. From Australia to Japan, from gas plumbers to coffee baristas, from students to pensioners - we thank you all.

Closing the gap is a long term undertaking. Our regular monthly givers have made the commitment to join us on this journey not just for today's kids, but for generations to come. That's why your regular support is so valuable - your commitment to invest in our work provides us with ongoing program sustainability, security and the ability to plan ahead with confidence.



The Cathy Freeman Foundation is about to embark on an exciting, but challenging new journey to support additional communities across Australia. **Your support is needed now more than ever.**

Please make a donation at
www.cathyfreemanfoundation.org.au





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