

Our Impact 2023-24



Variety - the Children's
Charity of Queensland



Made possible,
thanks to you.

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**Imagine a world where
all kids get the same
opportunities. No matter
what life throws at them.
No matter their ability.**

OUR VISION

For all Queensland kids to reach their full potential regardless of their ability or background.

OUR MISSION

To empower Queensland kids who are sick, experiencing disadvantage or living with a disability to live, laugh and learn.

OUR VALUES



Equality

We believe everyone deserves a fair go in life.



Community

We believe it takes a community to raise a child.



Action

We believe in rolling up our sleeves and getting stuff done.



Joy

We believe in the importance of lightness and laughter.



Thank you

from our Chair

Thank you for being an incredible part of the Variety – the Children’s Charity of Queensland family! With your support, you’re making it possible for kids across Queensland – kids facing illness, disabilities, and life’s tough breaks – to have brighter futures and reach their full potential.

Because of you, thousands of kids are out there making friends, gaining confidence, exploring their communities, and growing their independence. In fact, thanks to you, we’ve empowered **9,252 kids** this past year alone! And there are plenty of heartwarming stories to share in this Impact Report that show just how life-changing your support has been.

This year has been one of growth and big wins for us at Variety Queensland, and we’re excited to celebrate the amazing success of the 2024 QLD Variety Bash. Looking ahead, as we gear up for Variety’s 50th birthday in Australia in 2025, our team is getting ready to make an even bigger impact. With rising challenges in the NDIS and more families struggling to make ends meet, we’re on a mission to bring hope and joy to even more kids who need it most.

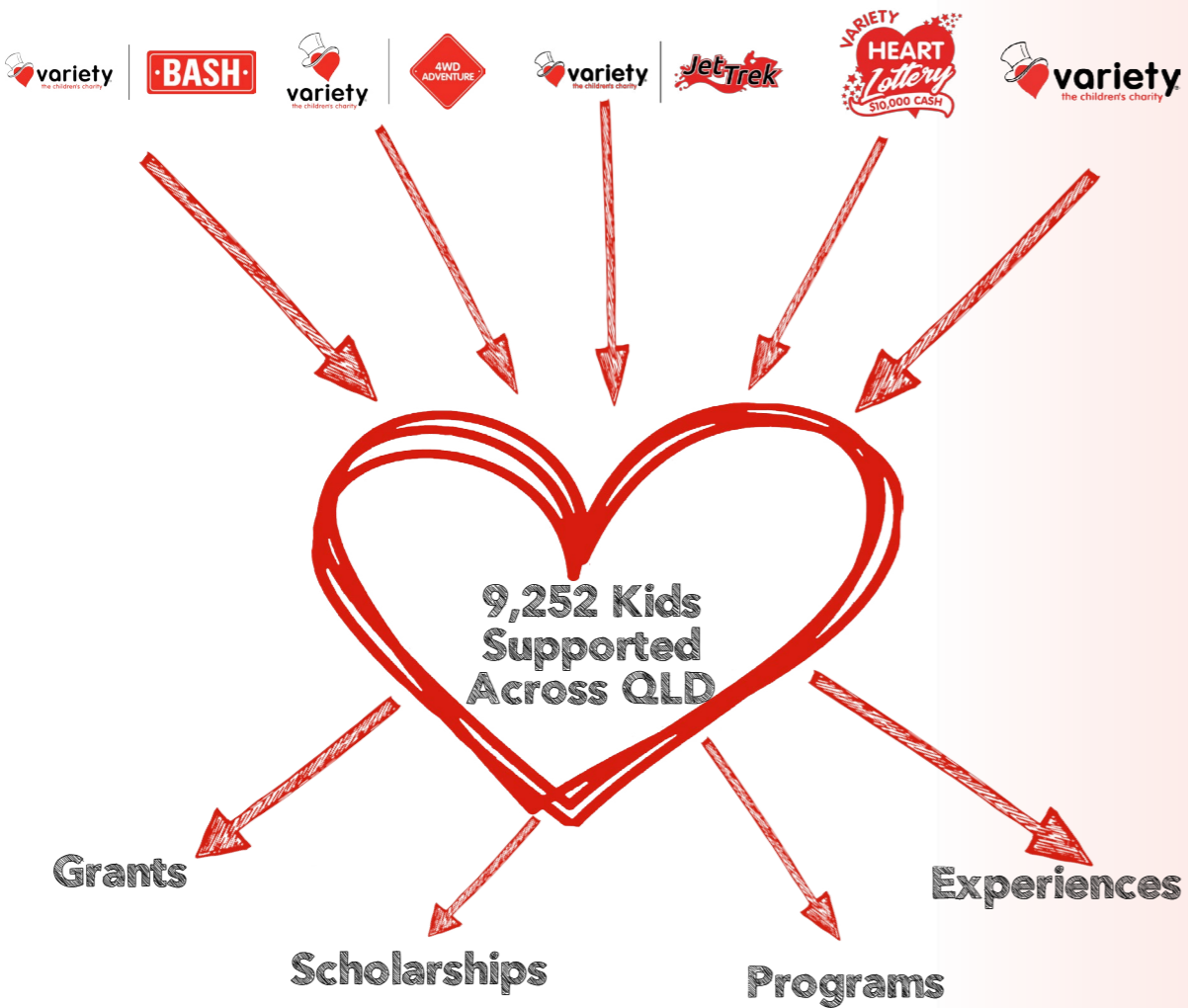
But none of this happens without YOU. Every time you participate in a Variety event, host a fundraiser, donate, volunteer, or contribute your time and resources, you’re lifting up Queensland’s kids in ways that matter.

Together, we’re not just supporting kids; we’re giving them the chance to truly be kids. Thank you for all you do, and for being such an essential part of our Variety family!

Viv Coleman

Interim Board Chair, Variety Queensland

Positively Changing the Lives of Children



GRANTS

We deliver practical help with medical and mobility equipment, technology, educational resources, learning aids and transport.

PROGRAMS

We offer inclusive programs to encourage participation, providing opportunities for kids to shine.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We support kids with an existing talent across the arts, education, and sport, so they can reach their full potential and follow their dreams.

EXPERIENCES

We host events where kids can make new friends, have fun, relax, and create special memories with their families.






The Impact We've Created Together








What Our Impact Looks Like

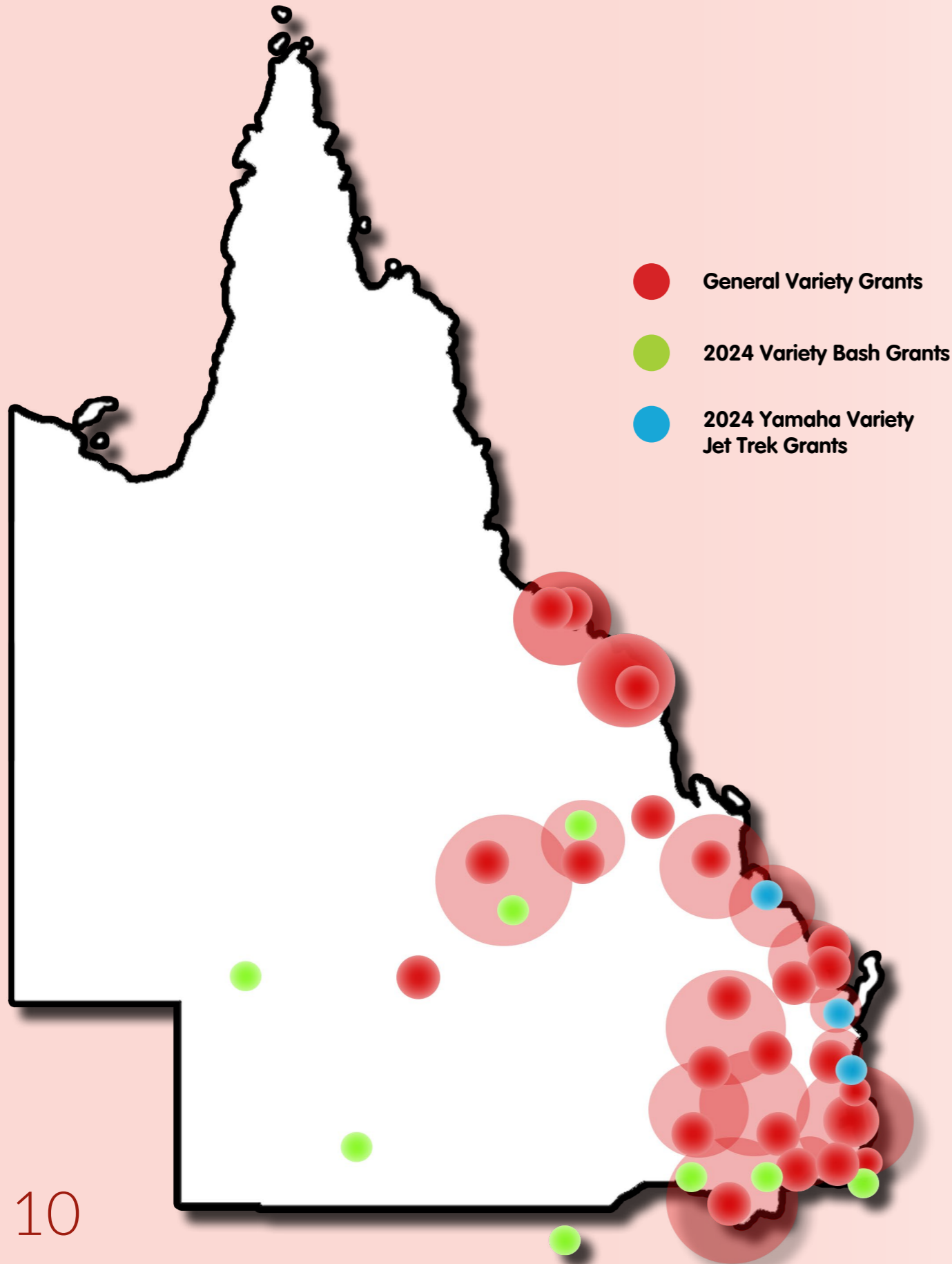
Variety's support is usually in the form of practical items like Keira's safety sleeper bed (pages 14-15) - which her family could not get through the NDIS. Today, an unprecedented number of families are seeking assistance from Variety. While we can attribute some of this to gaps within the NDIS, it's clear that heightened financial burdens due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis are having a big impact too.

Impact Highlights

-  **\$6,800** **Townsville**
School supplies for Cowboys House
-  **\$2,500** **Bargara**
Occupational therapy
-  **\$10,000** **Brisbane**
Variety Kids Choir
-  **\$43,300** **Gold Coast**
Variety Kids Sports Camp
-  **\$80,000** **Aspley**
Sunshine Coach Aspley Special School

-  **\$21,100** **Brisbane**
Toy drive
-  **\$1,400** **Thargomindah**
School trip for rural kids
-  **\$2,600** **Yandina Creek**
Thermomix to assist feeding
-  **\$61,700** **Boondall**
Variety Braille Music Camp
-  **\$56,000** **All of QLD**
7 Active Kids Sports Days

2023 - 2024 Impact Map



Aspley Special School provides programs for students from years 7-12 with intellectual disabilities who may have other impairments including physical, hearing, vision, and autism spectrum disorder. The school focuses on ensuring students are ready to transition into the broader community as independently as possible when the time comes for them to leave school.



With the assistance of sponsor Keystone Private, Variety was able to provide a Sunshine Coach to Aspley Special School at a cost of \$80,000. The coach enables students to gain volunteering opportunities at the community garden, local retirement villages, and valuable work experience at cafés and retail shops. The coach has been specially modified to ensure that all students, including those with mobility challenges, can have access to its benefits.

The Sunshine Coach is a great example of how Variety's sponsors can change the lives of children in need, while providing financial relief to local schools, parents and the wider community.

Meet Alice

Alice Morley, just 6 years old, has faced tremendous challenges in her short life.



Alice enjoying her first ride on her brand new bike, funded by YOUR SUPPORT



Diagnosed with Orbital Rhabdomyosarcoma in July 2021, Alice's parents, Sian, and James, along with her three brothers, moved from Calliope, in Queensland's Gladstone region, to Brisbane, where Alice underwent six months of chemotherapy and radiation to her right eye.

Alice was declared cancer-free by December 2022 but when her initial symptoms returned six months later, the Morley family were faced with unimaginable news. Doctors needed to remove Alice's entire right orbit – the optic nerve, the eyeball, the eyelid and everything around it – to save her life.

Through it all, Alice kept her radiant smile.

"It's really hard, but she keeps smiling," shares Sian. "She's always smiling and happy."

After finishing treatment in mid-March 2023, Alice went back to school. Her bravery and resilience continue to inspire many – including the team here at Variety Queensland.

We know from experience that families often put their lives on hold when their kids face illness. For the Morley family, this meant normal activities were off the cards while Alice was at her most vulnerable.

Thanks to your fundraising efforts, Variety Queensland was thrilled to present brand new bikes to Alice and her brothers William, Xander, and Henry. It was wonderful to see the kids enjoying their new bikes as the family returns to their normal, everyday activities.

"Look at these happy faces!" says Sian. "You have made this possible and I know we say thank you over and over again – but we just really appreciate it so much. We are going to have lots of riding adventures and the kids are just as thrilled as James and I are."

Special thanks to the Morley family for generously sharing Alice's story to raise awareness about cancer.

Meet Keira

Keira is a happy, chirpy little girl who loves to have adventures, climb and run – all the things doctors never thought she'd be able to do.



YOUR SUPPORT enables Keira to keep safe at night with the help of her safety sleeper



Keira was affected by Cytomegalovirus (CMV) before she was born. The virus impacted Keira's brain development and her hearing; she has been left profoundly deaf with two cochlear implants.

Keira's parents spent the first two years of her life not knowing if she would ever walk or achieve any of her goals.

Mum Danie shares, "She only learned to walk when she turned three, and we'd been doing physio since she was six months old – and one day we were doing our practicing, as we always do, and she just walked. We went, oh my God! She's doing it, it was awesome."

Danie adds, "That was the day she ran...and ran...and RAN!"

Little Keira quickly turned into an energetic adventurer – and it became difficult for the family to go on holiday and keep her safe. "She was an escapee," Danie says. "She could get out of anything."

"We found this safety sleeper bed that was completely enclosed. She couldn't get out of it, and she was safe, but we couldn't get it through NDIS," Danie explains.

The safety sleeper was overseas, and with nothing available locally, the family found Variety Queensland and applied.

"And it has been a game-changer," Danie says. "We can now go anywhere. Christmas holidays, weekends away. They really are great."

Dad Jack adds, "The NDIS is a great program, but there are gaps – to have a charity like Variety fill in those gaps is just amazing."



Meet Tom

Tom lives in a remote part of Gympie, Queensland. He's had a hard life – with his father battling a severe back injury, his mum must care for his siblings who all live with disabilities. And in 2022, he tragically lost his older brother.



With YOUR SUPPORT, Tom has been able to continue chasing his dream of representing Australia in Volleyball



Tom's hardships have not stopped him pursuing his dream to compete in beach volleyball. Despite the odds – and the fact that there are no sand courts in rural Gympie – he has defied expectations as he carves out a future where his dream can become a reality.

Competitive sports require significant funds, especially for kids living remotely. This was a tough prospect for Tom's family, but when they discovered that Variety could help fund people facing disadvantage, Tom was able to receive a Variety Heart Scholarship.

Tom had been using a worn-out pair of converse shoes. Even after his foot poked through his shoes mid-game, Tom improvised with zip ties to continue playing.

The Variety Heart Scholarship helped Tom with items as simple as a new pair of shoes – while also empowering him to attend open tournaments and play against Olympians. Now equipped with the right gear, he can compete in volleyball alongside his peers.

Tom has gone from strength to strength – winning multiple awards including Gold alongside his partner at the Queensland Beach Tour, and he was named 2023 Senior Sportsman of the Year.

Next up for Tom is to represent Australia at a national level and at the Olympics.

Tom and his family are so grateful for the support of Variety Queensland, with Tom expressing, "I just want to say thank you to all the supporters. I hope I do well and make them just as proud as my family."

And Tom adds, "Never quit something you love – just find a way to do it."



Our Grants

Practical help to kids and their communities when they need it most.

Examples of individual grants this year include a trampoline and swing set for 11-year-old Kai, living with autism, severe anxiety, ADHD and PTSD, and a mobility scooter for 11-year-old Steven, so he can get around school and keep up with his peers. Some community grants given out during this year's Variety Bash include two electronic game consoles for Denison State School in Emerald, toys and play equipment for the Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre, and a stainless-steel BBQ for Goodooga Central School, to help the indigenous students take part in their community.



Matthew

Matthew is from Douglas, southwest of Townsville. Living with Cerebral Palsy and being nonverbal, he communicates through sign language. Matthew has recently begun competing in para-athletics.

Recently, Matthew's mother reached out to Variety, hoping for assistance with his registration and uniform fees to attend the 2024 State Championships for athletics. Thanks to our generous sponsors, we were thrilled to grant this support.

"Thank you for all you do," says Mum Jessica. "You've absolutely paved the way for Matty!"

Our Scholarships

Supporting kids to pursue their dreams in sport, education and the arts.

This year, Variety Queensland has supported 18 kids with Variety Heart Scholarships totalling \$90,000. These scholarships support kids with an existing talent across the arts, education and sport, to reach their full potential. Some of these kids are supported by specific sponsors, and some over multiple years – which gives us the privilege of seeing their incredible growth. We were excited to cheer on six past and present Variety Heart Scholarship recipients – Brayden, competing in wheelchair rugby, Eithen, competing in wheelchair basketball, and Callum, Maddie, Paige and Poppy, competing in swimming – at this year's Paralympics.



Josh

Josh has taken major strides this year, competing at a higher level in tennis and signing a professional contract with Tennis Australia. His focus is on securing one of two coveted spots to represent Australia at the World Team Cup. He's making waves outside of tennis too, having won the inaugural 4km wheelchair race at the Gold Coast Marathon and impressing in a 10km road race.

Balancing school and intense training is tough, but Josh has shown incredible determination, raising his grades and making new friends along the way. With Wheelchair Tennis Nationals just around the corner and his first solo tournament in South Australia, his journey toward independence in the sport continues to evolve, always with an eye on being better each time.

Our Programs

Inclusive programs that support kids to shine.

This year, we held seven Active Kids Sports Days across Queensland. Our largest event of the year, the Variety Kids Sports Camp, provided a life-changing weekend for 50 children, along with their families and volunteers, creating memories to last a lifetime. Our Variety Kids Choir is going from strength to strength, with more live performances to help the kids grow in confidence, thanks to funding by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust. We have re-started our Financial Literacy Program in collaboration with EY. And we look forward to giving out many more Bikes for Kids in the coming year thanks to numerous workplace bike building days.



Quin

Quin has a condition that means her sight is deteriorating, but she has been able to take part in life-changing programs such as the Variety Braille Music Camp and Variety Kids Choir, to help build her self-confidence, while encouraging meaningful connections.

"These programs have 100% helped her build up her independence," says Mum Shan. "She's not always able to interact with other blind kids, but she has friends now. But most important was the mentoring - this has been huge for Quin."

"Variety has been amazing - and a huge support for our family. We can't thank you enough."

Our Experiences

Providing fun activities that help kids be kids.

A highlight on our calendar is the Children's Christmas Party in Brisbane, which has been running for more than 25 years. It is always wonderful to see our kids treated to a day of shows, fun rides, including the Variety Liberty Swing, interactive games, plenty of yummy food, face painting and many more activities. This year, Variety has also provided experiences for kids in the form of tickets to sports games, the NRL magic round, movies, a ski day, Disney on Ice and Australia Zoo.

Liberty Swing

Until now, some children have had to sit and watch from the sidelines as their siblings experience the freedom and exhilaration of a swing - something most of us take for granted.

The Liberty Swing is an Australian innovation that allows kids in wheelchairs the opportunity to experience the joy of having a swing. The swing is fully lockable and allows a maximum swing height - that is, really swinging, not just rocking back and forth.



You can see the joy on our kids' faces, as they enjoyed the Variety Liberty Swing at the Children's Christmas Party. At first, some had trepidation, but once our volunteers got underway, many started shouting "Higher! Higher!"



Fundraising Events



In 2024, the QLD Variety Bash travelled through some amazing parts of the country, from Emerald to the Gold Coast via Lightning Ridge. The Bashers raised an incredible \$1,772,003, surpassing the previous year's total.

Without the effort of all the wonderful Bashers, this event wouldn't be what it is. Thank you to all participants, volunteers, fundraisers, and donors for your hard work. We at Variety love and appreciate everything you do!



The 2024 Yamaha Variety Jet Trek certainly was an interesting one - adverse weather being the detriment to many days and legs of the whopping 600km trip. But through all of this, the Trekkers maintained a positive attitude.

The Trekkers raised a brilliant \$385,139 and got to meet some incredibly special individuals along the way, including the Old family who were VIPs for the trip - and welcomed with open arms by the Trekkers. Thank you to everyone involved in our 2024 Yamaha Variety Jet Trek, it was a fabulous year and we can't wait for the next one. Here's to you and your incredible fundraising!



In late 2023, the 4WD Adventure journeyed through some of New South Wales and Victoria's most scenic high country. Zig zagging their way south, the Adventurers passed some iconic tourist hotspots, waving the Variety flags with pride.

Collectively, the 4WD Adventurers raised an unreal \$329,995 for Aussie kids. Noah and Flynn got to go on their first flight and attend the final night with the 4WD Adventurers where smiles, tall tales and good times were enjoyed by all. Thank you for being so welcoming to the Giles family and raising all the funds you did for Aussie kids in need.

Fundraising Events



A first for this year, the NRL Magic Round Long Lunch provided Variety supporters an opportunity to come together and share a day of celebrating all things NRL with special guests Trevor 'the Axe' Gillmeister and Shane Webcke.



Outside of the motoring events, there are many other ways in which YOU raised funds for Variety Queensland to help more kids.

From galas to long lunches, golf days, Containers for Change, Hair with Heart, Miss World Australia, the Variety Heart Lottery and all the fundraising events (big and small) organised by many of our supporters, we truly are changing kids' lives for the better!



Many of our hard working supporters organised incredible fundraising events throughout 2023 and 2024.

Variety Bash entrants, Team Jayden Enterprises, hosted a Casino Night on July 13. This unique fundraiser was enjoyed by everyone who attended and raised a whopping \$31,576 for Aussie kids who need it most.

The huge array of fundraising events hosted each year are a testament to the hard work of all our fundraisers. We are so grateful to each and everyone of you who are part of the Variety family and we can't wait to see you all again in 2025!

Thank you to our supporters



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