

MEDIA RELEASE



FREEMASONS
ON THE CENTRAL COAST

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District 21 – Central Coast

\$6,000 donation for Central Coast kids



Victoria with Hudson, Graeme Ingall and Lorraine Churchill

Generally, at this kind of event, recipient organisations give 'thank you' speeches on receiving a donation and there is little, if any, personal contact with the final beneficiaries.

Today, at Wamberal Surf Club, that format was 'turned on its head' somewhat with **Freemasons on the Central Coast** (FotCC) asking recipient organisations to bring along one of their beneficiaries to receive the donation on their behalf. This provided a wonderful opportunity for all present to hear first-hand accounts – and gain a real understanding – of the impact and outcomes of their fundraising.

FotCC, along with the six associated masonic lodges of District 21, were donating to two organisations that are very close to their hearts and who receive little or no government funding. On this occasion Central Coast Kids In Need (CCKIN) and Save Our Kids from Suicide (SOKS), a project of the Rotary Club of Gosford North, both received a donation of \$3,000. This takes the total donated by FotCC to approximately **\$30,300** for CCKIN, and **\$52,300** for SOKS.

\$82,600

Donated
to date

Promoting Freemasonry on the Central Coast through community action, charitable relief and the advancement of education.

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Graeme, a director of **Freemasons on the Central Coast**, welcomed all present and explained that due to COVID-19 the usual donations of vital equipment during the year had been curtailed; however, to keep support flowing FotCC had given all six lodges a choice of allocating their donation to a number of local organisations, the chosen two being present today.

Central Coast Kids in Need (CCKIN)

Lorraine from CCKIN spoke briefly of their organisation which commenced some 27 years ago serving families whose children were in need of medical assistance – high cost prescriptions, specialised formulae, equipment, etc. – travel expenses and accommodation for a family member whilst their child was in hospital.

Victoria, a beneficiary of CCKIN, spoke of financial hardship when their first child (Ella) was born with Down Syndrome. Initially, Ella was transferred to Sydney for a period of three months until her medical conditions had stabilised, then on returning home, specialised equipment needed to be hired. The cost of three months accommodation, travel and sustenance was astronomical for a young family and added to this, their continued residence on the Central Coast due to work commitments, and the anguish of being separated through such a heart-wrenching time with endless decisions to be made was both financially and emotionally draining.



Graeme Ingall loves writing big cheques



Victoria talks about the hardships and how CCKIN helped her family

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Lorraine with Hudson

Their second child (Hudson) was born prematurely and yet again CCKIN stepped in with much needed support. Victoria stated that she and her husband 'will be forever grateful for all the assistance given by CCKIN – the accommodation and the travelling plus the support and comfort – talking to someone just seemed to lessen the stress. It was unreal. I would like to thank Freemasons on the Central Coast for their donation of \$3,000 which I am sure Lorraine and Effy will use to CCKIN's great benefit.'



Victoria and Hudson (6 months)



Victoria with Hudson, Graeme Ingall and Lorraine Churchill

Credit: Denis Dean

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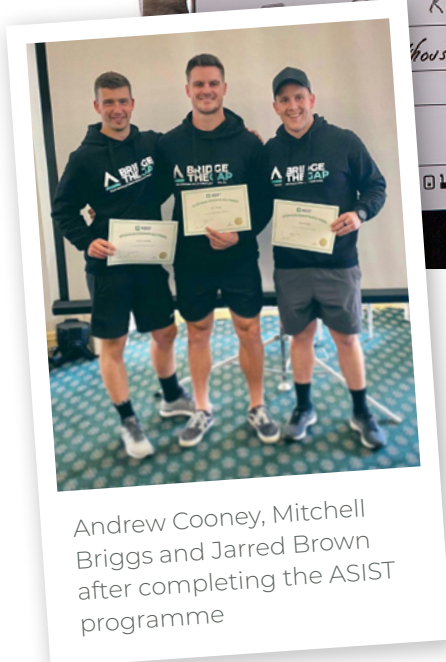
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Save Our Kids from Suicide (SOKS)

Lester, from the Rotary Club of Gosford North, is the coordinator of the SOKS project which commenced several years ago. From its beginning, **Freemasons on the Central Coast** have supported the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) programme. ASIST trains people in identifying and approaching a person who is contemplating suicide, especially in a crisis situation. Training for the participants in this program, which has mainly included teachers and school support staff, is provided by Lifeline. 'Mind Your Sports Mates' is a similar programme that trains people in identifying the symptoms of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation.



Warren Mills (Treasurer of Rotary Club of Gosford North), Graeme Ingall, Lester Pearson and Andrew Cooney (Bridge the Gap)



Andrew Cooney, Mitchell Briggs and Jarred Brown after completing the ASIST programme

Beneficiary Andrew from 'Bridge the Gap' commenced an activity group named 'Run Club' which originally involved a run or swim, and then coffee and a yarn, but strangely, over time the function changed, especially with younger members speaking of their individual difficulties such as lack of life skills, career issues, managing emotions, suicidal thoughts, lack of resilience and confidence in dealing with confrontation.

Andrew and two mates decided they needed some assistance in coping with this changed direction, hence attendance at an ASIST programme. This gave them confidence in speaking generally about problems and in conducting group

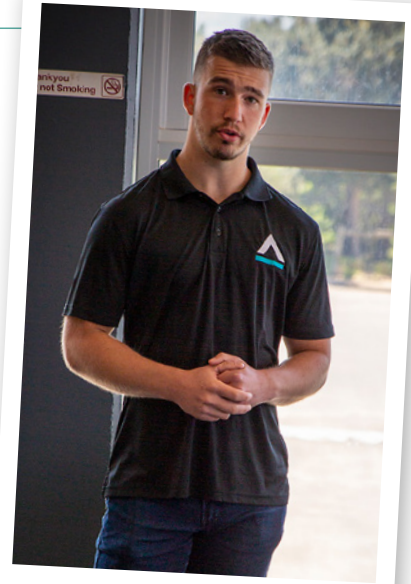
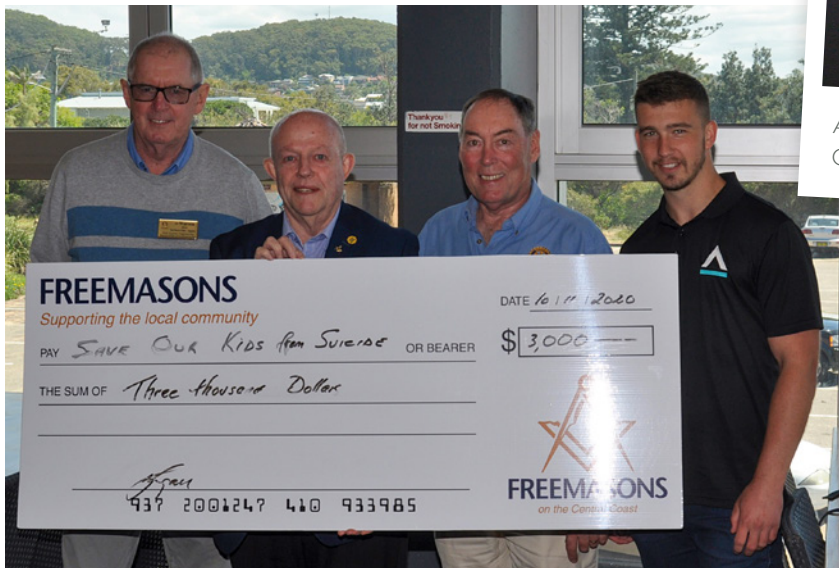
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discussions, recommending assistance from a list provided by Lifeline but more importantly, gave them permission and confidence to speak about suicide with individuals. Additionally, the course taught them how to dissipate the stress caused by group meetings and traumatic discussions.

Andrew thanked the Freemasons for their financial support in assisting with the provision of such a course which he believes has been beneficial to all who have attended and to those in need of succour.



Andrew Cooney (Bridge the Gap) tells his story

Warren Mills, Graeme Ingall, Lester Pearson and Andrew Cooney

Credit: Denis Dean

The event was also attended by District 21 Freemasons and FotCC members who left knowing a little more about each organisation, confident that their support was being directed to the right place and motivated to continue to support both of these deserving organisations.

\$82,600

Donated to date

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Hi-resolution versions of all photographs shown in this Media Release can be downloaded by following the link below:

- [10Nov20_CCKIN_SOKS](#)

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