

CLOWN DOCTORS

Nationally: 1996 - present, Hobart: 2004 - present



Project Description

The Humour Foundation operates the Clown Doctors program in 18 hospitals around Australia. The program is ongoing in Royal Hobart Hospital two days a week. The clown doctors visit the North West Hospital in Burnie and Launceston General Hospital 4 times a year through our Outreach Program.

Clown Doctors work in partnership with health professionals. They divert children during painful procedures, help calm distressed children in emergency, and encourage children in physiotherapy, or just brighten their day. 'Clown Rounds' are conducted through most wards including intensive care, burns, oncology and emergency. The whole hospital community benefits – patients, family and staff.

Host Organisation

The Humour Foundation

Highlights

Every smile or glimmer in the eye of a child, or sigh of relief from parents are highlights.

"After a week of being in hospital, today is the first day I have seen my child smile, thanks to the clown doctors"
Parent at Royal Hobart Hospital

Project Contact

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Project workers

Jean-Paul Bell Artistic Director and Co-founder . Dr Peter Sptizer GP, Medical Director and co-founder. The Foundation has 50 professional Clown Doctors.

Hobart Clown Doctors: Andrew Brassington, Leigh Tesch, Peter Dowling, Jacqui Dawborn, Sara Cooper, Tanya Langdon & Les Winspear

Keywords

Clowning, Hobart based, Hospital

Partnerships

Principal Partner: Cadbury Schweppes

Founding Partner: Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Fund

Corporate and Community Donors helping Clown Doctors around Australia: Big4 Holiday Parks, Johnson & Johnson Pacific, Brisbane Airport Corporation, Laing O'Rourke, Day of Difference Foundation, Marriott Hotels and Resort, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, mCorp Investments, Freedman Foundation, Sakata Rice Snacks Australia, holysheet!, Sunkids Children's Centre, Insurance Australia Group, The Calvert Jones Foundation, James N Kirby Foundation & The Shane Warne Foundation.

Outcomes

The work of the Clown Doctors is extremely important and the outcomes speak for themselves. The healing power of humour has been recognized since antiquity. Everyone knows that 'Laughter is the best medicine', but international research has found real physiological and psychological benefits to patients.

The added bonus is that the entire hospital community benefits. A young child who is happier and more content, a parent who has reduced stress levels, as well as staff who enjoy a more relaxed working environment. Humour uplifts the whole community spirit and provides a wonderful coping tool in difficult times.

An integral part of the National Program is to monitor and evaluate the Clown Doctors effectiveness and performance. Clown Doctors carry out continual training and Professional Development. They also undergo an annual performance review where they are assessed by the Professional Development Coordinator. In addition to Clown Doctor Appraisals, The Humour Foundation also has regular liaison and reviews with host hospitals to ensure we are meeting their needs, and being most effective within the hospital environment.



The Clown Doctor program has proven itself to be an extremely sustainable model. The programs effectiveness and popularity is evidenced by the number of hospitals who are asking for us to visit them.

The Foundation provides on-going support and professional development to ensure Clown doctors are well-nourished professionally and are able to perform to the best of their ability. All programs are supported by rigorous Quality Assurance process.

Oversized medical equipment, 'red-nose' transplants, 'cat' scans, humour checks and funny bone examinations are all part of the fun. By exaggerating intimidating jargon and procedures, fear and anxiety are reduced. Further, by asking permission to enter a child's space and engaging with them on their terms, Clown Doctors return a sense of power to a child who is in an environment where they may feel very little

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Image

Clown Doctor Postcard Image (Detail)
Photographer: Nick Osbourne