# Caring
## for Country Kids

Royal Far West Supporter Newsletter | Edition 2, 2026

Royal Far West
Children's health, country-wide

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## Welcome to our latest Newsletter

This is my first opportunity to connect with many of you as Chief Executive Officer of Royal Far West, and I am delighted to do so through a newsletter filled with stories of impact, generosity and community.

Since joining Royal Far West earlier this year, I have been inspired by the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters, and by the resilience of the children and families we serve. Every day, I see the difference that early intervention, specialist support and strong community connections can make in the lives of country children.

In this edition, you'll read about families accessing specialist care closer to home through our outreach clinics, our growing reach across Queensland, the volunteers and supporters helping make our work possible, and the communities coming together to raise funds for country kids.

As we look to the future, our new Strategic Plan reinforces our commitment to going beyond for country kids. It charts a path for greater reach, deeper impact and stronger partnerships, ensuring more children and families in rural and remote Australia have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of where they live. You can learn more about the priorities shaping our next phase of growth in this edition of the newsletter.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping us create brighter futures for country children and their families.

Warmly,

Dr Briony Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Far West

# *2030 Strategy:*

## No country child left behind

Earlier this year, we launched Royal Far West's 2030 Strategy. Our vision is clear: Every child in rural and remote Australia should have access to the support they need to thrive.

This new strategy sets our course for the years ahead, ensuring we can continue to create real, generational change for country children and their families and communities.

*Scan the QR code to learn more*

## Reaching New Heights

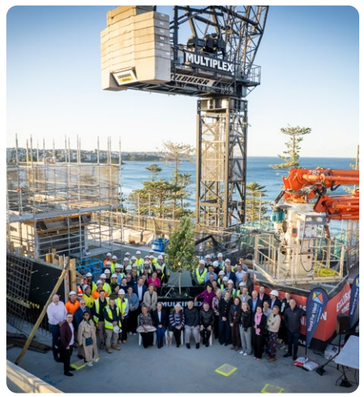
Royal Far West has reached an exciting milestone in the transformation of our Manly site, with the Aurora building officially topping out at its highest point.

A traditional topping out ceremony recently brought together Royal Far West representatives, project partners and community leaders. We celebrated the completion of the building's structure and recognised the collective effort behind the project.

Aurora forms part of the Royal Far West Neighbourhood, a new precinct that will combine health, accommodation and community spaces. The precinct includes refurbished rooms for country children and their families travelling to Manly for care.

This milestone marks an important step towards creating a sustainable future for Royal Far West, ensuring we can continue supporting country children for generations to come.

Construction continues, with the full neighbourhood on track for completion by the end of 2026.

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# *News*

## Advocating for Country Kids in NSW

Royal Far West recently made a submission to the NSW Youth Advocate's Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2027-2030. In our submission, we called for greater recognition of the unique challenges children and young people in rural and remote communities in NSW are facing.

We highlighted the growing developmental vulnerability among country children as they are facing multiple challenges including trauma, poverty, and housing instability. The latest Australian Early Development Census showed many children in rural and remote areas in NSW are starting school already behind in key areas such as communication, learning and emotional wellbeing.

We also raised the impact of workforce shortages and rising cost-of-living pressures. Limited childcare, disaster recovery and rising mental health need are all compounding the problem.

Royal Far West is advocating for stronger support for country children through earlier identification of developmental concerns along with increased investment in multidisciplinary early intervention services. We believe every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, regardless of where they live.

*Scan here to read our full submission*

## Walking Together Through Culture and Connection

Royal Far West recently marked NAIDOC Week 2026 with a series of activities celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, stories and connections.

At our Centre for Country Kids in Manly, staff came together for a NAIDOC Week morning tea with native Australian-inspired treats and hands-on activities. The conversations that followed touched on culture, reconciliation and community.

Our Royal Far West School community also joined local schools and families for a NAIDOC celebration focused on storytelling, cultural learning and creative expression. Students participated in the Weaving Stories program, learning traditional weaving practices and exploring themes of connection to Country.

The program culminated in the Saltwater Exhibition at local Curl Curl Creative Space, showcasing woven artworks created by Royal Far West School students and community participants. Led by Senior Knowledge Holder Caroline Glass-Pattison, Master Weaver Karleen Green and Noongar Weaver Jodie Dowd, the exhibition celebrated the sharing of cultural knowledge across generations through art, storytelling and community connection.

These activities reflect Royal Far West's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and to building respectful, meaningful relationships with First Nations peoples and communities.

# *Riley's Story:*
# When Wrap-Around Care Connects

**Riley is a bright, curious and creative seven-year-old Kamilaroi girl from Western NSW. Despite her strengths, Riley has faced developmental challenges, including delayed walking and speech. She also experiences sensory sensitivities and finds emotional regulation and social interaction difficult.**

Riley's story reflects the experience of many country children. Across remote and very remote Australia, only 43% of children are developmentally on track across five key developmental areas before they start school, highlighting the urgent need for early identification and intervention.

Referred by her GP for an autism assessment, Riley and her mum, Shellie, attended Royal Far West's Dubbo in-community clinic. Through this service, specialist clinicians work alongside local families, educators and health professionals to provide comprehensive assessments closer to home. In Dubbo, the multidisciplinary team supports children like Riley through coordinated care, alongside weekly clinics led by Royal Far West's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Marcel Zimmet.

This kind of coordinated care is essential in rural communities, where long wait times and workforce shortages can make specialist services incredibly difficult to access. In some areas, families face waits of up to four years for paediatric care, while rural towns have 80% less access to occupational therapists than metropolitan areas. This leaves many children without the help they need during critical developmental years.

Read Riley's story to learn how Royal Far West supported her journey and the difference that support has made at school, at home and in everyday life.

*Scan the QR code and read Riley's full story*





# Bringing Specialist Care Closer to Home – Our Partnership with Little Wings

**Continuing our recent focus on in-community clinics, in June a team of nine Royal Far West clinicians travelled to Broken Hill with Little Wings to provide comprehensive developmental assessments for local children and families.**

Little Wings, a Sydney-based not-for-profit children's charity, is a vital partner in helping Royal Far West reach country communities. Through its Medical Wings program, our clinicians can travel directly to regional and remote locations several times each year.

Our visit to Broken Hill enabled children and their families to access specialist assessments closer to home. This reduced the need to travel long distances to Sydney, take time off school and work, and arrange care for siblings.

As part of the visit, Royal Far West joined Little Wings in advocating for urgent funding support during the current fuel crisis. Interviews with ABC Broken Hill and coverage in regional papers, including The Land, helped shine a spotlight on the growing demand for specialist children's health services.

Little Wings also supports around 40% of families travelling to Royal Far West's Centre for Country Kids in Manly, with three to five families relying on the service every week.

*"Little Wings is a critical enabler of equitable healthcare access for country children. Their service directly supports earlier diagnosis, continuity of care, and reduces the financial burden on families who are already doing everything they can to support their children,"* said Dr Briony Scott, CEO of Royal Far West.

# Growing Our Impact in Queensland

**As Royal Far West continues to expand its services across Australia, we're proud to be supporting more children, families and educators throughout regional, rural and remote Queensland than ever before.**

Over the past year, our Schools & Early Years team worked with 317 children across 97 towns and communities throughout Queensland, partnering with 24 primary schools and 28 early learning centres to deliver specialist developmental, mental health and wellbeing support.

Through a combination of in-community visits and telehealth services, Royal Far West clinicians provided speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology support to children. These children would otherwise have had limited access to specialist care close to home.

Our work reached communities across the state, including communities affected by natural disasters during the year.

Just as importantly, we worked alongside educators, early childhood professionals and parents, helping build local knowledge, skills and confidence so the progress made in a therapy session doesn't stop when the clinician leaves, but carries through to the classroom and back home.

# *Events*
## Ride for Country Kids Raises $500,000

**64 Riders.**
**300km.**
**$500,000 Raised.**

Our Ride for Country Kids 2026 brought together 64 riders and hundreds of supporters across regional New South Wales for an unforgettable journey in support of country children.

Over three days, riders cycled more than 300km. The route took them through Parkes, Molong, Manildra, Trundle, Eugowra and Forbes.

Along the way, our riders were warmly welcomed by local schools, families, volunteers and community groups, and heard powerful stories of the difference early intervention and timely access to care can make in a child's life.

Despite some challenging weather, the Ride was defined by resilience and camaraderie. Everyone rode with a shared sense of purpose.

*"Every kilometre ridden and every dollar raised helps ensure more country children can access the care they need to thrive, no matter where they live,"* said Dr Briony Scott, Chief Executive Officer of Royal Far West.

Thanks to the collective efforts of our riders, sponsors, volunteers, fundraising branches, councils and supporters, the Ride has raised just over $500,000 for country kids and their families!

*Scan the QR code to see more photos*

# *New Holland in Action:*
## Supporting Country Communities

For organisations embedded in regional Australia, the wellbeing of country communities is about more than business – it's personal. As one of Australia's leading agricultural equipment brands, New Holland works alongside farmers, families and regional communities every day.

That connection is one of the reasons a team from New Holland took part in this year's Ride for Country Kids. The event provided an opportunity to give back to the communities that support them, while helping raise vital funds to improve access to developmental and mental health services for country children.

We spoke with Daryn Higgins from New Holland about why supporting Royal Far West matters, what he learned during the Ride, and why he believes more organisations should get involved.

***New Holland operates at the heart of many regional communities across Australia. Why was supporting Ride for Country Kids a natural fit for your organisation?***

New Holland operates at the heart of regional communities right across Australia. Our dealers, staff and customers operate in these communities, so when we see a cause that's addressing a real gap for country families, it's not really a choice, it's just an extension of who we already are.

***Since joining the Ride for Country Kids community, what have you learned about the challenges and opportunities facing country children and families?***

Since joining the Ride for Country Kids community, it's really opened my eyes to how hard it is for country families to access health services that those of us in the cities simply take for granted.

***What would you say to other organisations considering supporting initiatives like Ride for Country Kids and Royal Far West?***

Just do it. It's an incredible experience, and once you see the impact firsthand, you understand exactly why so many riders keep coming back year after year.

***If you could describe the Ride for Country Kids experience in three words, what would they be and why?***

Very. Rewarding. Experience. Rewarding physically, in pushing through each leg of the ride — but even more rewarding emotionally, watching the funds we raise change lives for kids in the country.

# Why I Support Country Kids Every Month

Regular giver Daniel shares how his regional upbringing, lived experience and belief in equal opportunity inspired him to support country kids through Royal Far West.

*My name is Daniel, and I recently had the pleasure of meeting one of Royal Far West's Fundraisers, Peter, when he knocked on my door. We ended up having a really genuine conversation about Royal Far West, its purpose, and the difference it makes. It immediately connected with my own values.*

*I grew up in regional New South Wales, and my mum was a registered nurse who worked in the Central West. Throughout my childhood, I constantly heard about the challenges country families face and the reality that where a child grows up can determine the services they can access. That has always stayed with me.*

*I'm also neurodivergent, so I experienced first hand how important early support can be. Having access to the right services, strategies and people who believe in you can completely change a child's future. Every child deserves that opportunity, regardless of whether they live in Sydney or a small country town.*

*Today I work in fairness, inclusion and respect, helping create more inclusive workplaces and employment opportunities for people who have traditionally faced barriers. It has shown me that when people are given the right support, they don't just participate, they thrive.*

*Country Australia has produced some of our greatest doctors, scientists, innovators and community leaders. There is incredible talent in our regional communities, but talent alone isn't enough if children can't access the support they need to reach their potential.*

*That's why supporting Royal Far West felt like such an easy decision. While most of us can't directly deliver services, we can all play a small part in helping organisations that do. If my contribution helps even one child receive the support they need to build confidence, develop new skills and realise their full potential, then it's an investment worth making.*

*I hope, in some small way, it helps create a future where every country child has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter where they call home.*

**Daniel Osgood**

By joining Daniel and hundreds of others in our community of Regular Givers, you can help ensure country children don't miss out on the support they need to thrive.

*Scan the QR code to learn more*





# *More Than a Shop:* Community, Connection and Country Kids

Royal Far West's Op Shops are much more than places to find a bargain. They're community hubs. Volunteers, customers and supporters all come together there to help improve the health and wellbeing of country kids.

Located in Forbes, Trundle and Port Macquarie, our three Op Shops raised more than $120,000 in FY26, money that goes straight into assessments, therapy sessions and support for country families.

Behind each store is a dedicated team of volunteers who generously give their time, skills and energy.

In Forbes, Secretary Nygarie Bilsborough has been volunteering with Royal Far West since she was just 12 years old, following in the footsteps of her parents and other family members. Today, she helps run the Forbes Op Shop alongside a committed volunteer team.

*"It's a family affair,"* says Nygarie. *"It keeps you in contact with people. It's a social connection with the community and a source of support for our volunteers."*

In Trundle, Branch President Jo Coster has her own personal connection to Royal Far West. She was inspired to volunteer after her daughter Chelsea received orthodontic care through Royal Far West as a teenager. More than 15 years later, she's still giving back.

*"We're like a family and we have a lot of fun,"* says Jo. *"A lot of our volunteers are now widows and we're their family."*

In Port Macquarie, Op Shop Manager Margaret McNuff continues a family tradition of supporting Royal Far West that began with her mother many years ago.

*"The shop brings me great joy,"* says Margaret. *"I enjoy helping people, helping the children Royal Far West supports, and working alongside volunteers who have become great friends."*

Whether they are sorting donations, serving customers, organising raffles or simply sharing a conversation over the counter, our volunteers are helping ensure more country children can access the support they need to thrive.

# *Community Support*

## St Luke's Students Step Up for Country Kids

**A big thank you to the students, teachers and wider school community at St Luke's Grammar School Bayview Campus in Sydney for their wonderful support of Royal Far West.**

Year 6 students recently organised two fundraising initiatives, including a vibrant Country Fair and a "Wild West" lamington drive, raising more than $5,400 to support Royal Far West's work across rural and remote Australia.

The creativity and generosity shown by the students was inspiring, demonstrating how young people can create positive change in their communities and beyond.

We are incredibly grateful for their support and the compassion they have shown for children facing barriers to accessing healthcare and developmental support.

## Royal Far West at the Manly Fun Run & Walk

**Royal Far West was proud to take part in this year's Manly Fun Run & Walk, joining more than 2,000 participants for a day of fitness, fundraising and community spirit.**

A special congratulations to Marina from our Fundraising Team. She completed the 10km course in an impressive 44 minutes, finishing as the fourth female runner across the line.

We are grateful to the Rotary Club of Manly for generously donating the Royal Far West team's entry fees back to the organisation.

Events like the Manly Fun Run & Walk are a wonderful reminder of the strength of community support and its role in helping us continue our work.

## Get Involved for Country Kids

**There are many ways you can help make a difference for country children and families.**

Whether you're celebrating a birthday, anniversary, wedding or other special occasion, fundraising for Royal Far West is a meaningful way to turn your milestone into support for country kids. Recently, one generous supporter celebrated her 80th birthday by asking friends and family to donate in lieu of gifts, raising more than $6,000 to help children access vital developmental and mental health services.

You can also honour a loved one through in-memory giving, or create your own online fundraising page for a personal challenge or event. You can even support Royal Far West through the Return and Earn recycling program.

Whatever your fundraising idea, every dollar raised helps ensure country children and their families can access the care and support they need to thrive.

**Email us at donorservices@royalfarwest.org.au or scan the QR code to find out how you can get involved and start fundraising for country kids**

## Spin Off Challenge gears up for 2026

**Following the success of our inaugural Spin Off Challenge, Royal Far West is excited to announce the event will return to Manly on Thursday 12 November 2026.**

Last year, corporate partners, local businesses, schools and community members came together on the Manly beachfront to raise an incredible $100,000 for country kids. Teams cycled 100km on stationary bikes. It was a day filled with energy and camaraderie, and a shared commitment to kids living in rural and remote Australia.

The overwhelming support from participants, sponsors and supporters has helped establish Spin Off as an exciting new addition to Royal Far West's fundraising calendar.

Tim Fussell, Founder and CEO of imei, an Australian communications company based in Frenchs Forest, said his team thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the inaugural event:

*"imei was privileged to be part of the inaugural Spin Off Challenge in 2025; it was a fantastic day filled with fun, friendly rivalry between the teams, and such a great experience that we have committed to entering two teams in 2026."*

We look forward to bringing the community together once again this November for another memorable day of community connection, friendly competition and support for country kids.

*Scan the QR code to watch highlights from the 2025 Spin Off Challenge.*

**Yes!** I want to close the gap for country children, and help more vulnerable children access the vital long-term care they need to thrive.

## Please accept my gift of:

$ _____

## My details

Title: _____ Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Pcode: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will to help Australia's country kids.

## Payment details

**Please debit my:**

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex

Card number:

| | | | |
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| | | | |

Expiry: ___/___

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

*OR* Please find enclosed my:

☐ Cheque ☐ Money Order

(payable to Royal Far West)

*Scan QR code to donate online*


Free call 1800 961 001

www.royalfarwest.org.au/donate

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Royal Far West

Children's health, country-wide

## Your Legacy, Their Future

Every child's story begins with the opportunities they have in their earliest years.

For children growing up in rural and remote Australia, those opportunities can be limited by distance, workforce shortages and a lack of access to specialist support. Too often, where a child lives determines the help they can receive and the opportunities available to them. At Royal Far West, we believe every country child deserves the chance to grow, learn and thrive. A gift in your Will can help ensure that future generations of children have access to the developmental, mental health and wellbeing support they need to reach their full potential.

By leaving a gift to Royal Far West, you become part of a story that extends far beyond your own lifetime. Your legacy will help create brighter futures for country children, stronger families and more resilient communities for years to come.

Whether large or small, your gift will help create lasting change, ensuring more country children have the support they need to write their own stories of possibility, confidence and hope.

*Scan the QR code to learn more about how you can leave a gift to Royal Far West*