

Hastings Co-op gives helping hand to 10 local community groups

Ten local community groups were awarded \$15,500 in Hastings Co-op Community Chest grants last night, funding everything from vital life saving equipment and firefighting tools to school sports uniforms, furniture and and outdoor kitchen at the new Comboyne Museum.

“The successful recipients may be diverse and come from all over the Hastings and Camden Haven, but the thing they have in common is a commitment to improving the local way of life, not just for members, but the wider community,” Chief executive office Nick de Groot said.

Mr de Groot explained that Hastings Co-op IGA customers play a pivotal role in the Community Chest program, with funds from specially-marked products, including the Community Co. range, pooled to provide the grants.

“Every time customers purchase a specially-marked products they can feel good about giving back to the community too – and we sincerely appreciate you supporting our four IGA supermarkets,” he said.

The funding injection is a massive boost for community groups, who rely heavily on membership fees and fundraisers to make their dreams come true.

Community Chest grants will pave the way for: sports singlets for St Joseph’s Primary School Wauchope athletes; firefighting equipment and tools for King Creek Rural Fire Brigade; an outdoor kitchen at Comboyne Museum; outdoor furniture for Learn from Horses; new office chairs for Hastings 2WAY FM’s studio; a dust extractor for Kendall Mens Shed; laptops, printers and a mobile braoadband receiver for Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club and Port Macquarie/Hastings branch of National Seniors of Australia and; defibrillators for the new Port Macquarie Arts and Crafts Centre and Wauchope Netball Club’s courts at Wauchope Stadium.

“What’s great about the Community Chest grants program is the projects are helping to build a brighter future, and more importantly, recognising the hard-working community groups that make a real difference to the local way of life, whether that’s sports clubs, schools, volunteer organisations or disabilitiy and special interest groups,” Mr de Groot said.

See over page for the full list of 2023 recipients. Applications for the 2024 Community Chest grants will open in October.

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Successful Community Chest grant recipients

1. **Hastings 2WAY FM**, who will be purchasing office chairs for their studio here in Wauchope, which is run by volunteers. I'd also like to thank the radio station for their ongoing support of Hastings Co-op. For those who may not know, 2WAY FM broadcasts right across the Greater Port Macquarie region and you can tune in on 103.9FM
2. **Kendall Mens Shed**, who will use their grant to purchase dust extractors in their workshop at Kendall Showground. The group always welcomes new members and operates every Tuesday and Thursday
3. **Port Macquarie Arts and Crafts Centre** will be purchasing a defibrillator for their new facility on the Oxley Highway. Congratulations on the new amenities. We hope the dust extractors you purchased with your grant last year are being put to good use
4. **St Joseph's Primary School Wauchope**, which will use their grant for new singlets for students when they are representing the school at athletics and cross country events throughout the year
5. **Hastings Valley Motorcycle Club**. Congratulations on your grant for a laptop and a mobile broadband receiver, which they need for timing equipment for local events. We've been long-term supporters of the club and its events and wish you all the best for race meets in 2024
6. **Learn from Horses**, who applied for a grant for tables and chairs so students, visitors, the elderly and disabled are more comfortable. The group has 28 horses and ponies (which are referred to as 'furry therapists') which help promote life skills for physically and mentally disabled people, the elderly and local youth who have experienced trauma
7. **Wauchope Netball Club**, who will be purchasing a vitally important defibrillator to be housed at Wauchope Stadium in case of emergencies. Community Chest grants have helped many local clubs purchase defibrillators over the years and for those who may not know there are defibrillators at nine of our stores across the region
8. **Comboyne Community Association**, whose grant will help with the construction of an outdoor kitchen at Comboyne Museum, and allow them to sell food to visitors and in turn continue improving the museum for the benefit of the whole community
9. **King Creek Rural Fire Brigade**, who will be replacing some old firefighting equipment with more modern equipment and tools such as a new blower, battery powered radio and rescue saw. Special thanks to all of your volunteers for keeping our community safe
10. **Port Macquarie/Hastings branch of National Seniors of Australia** who will use their grant to purchase a laptop and printer so they can continue to keep members updated and have modern equipment for presentations, such as how seniors can keep their IT skills up to date.