



Joint Statement from the Our National Heart (Heart of the Nation) and Michael Hughes Foundation

March 2023

The Board of Directors from both the Michael Hughes Foundation (MHF) and Our National Heart Pty Ltd (known as Heart of the Nation or HOTN) are proud to announce a merger of the two charities. It has been endorsed that MHF will merge with HOTN prior to 30 June 2023 under the leadership of its Founder Greg Page.

“HOTN is excited to be merging with the respected and experienced MHF. Together, with a mission to increase survival from cardiac arrest, we will continue to work with our existing partners on current programs we are delivering and are proud to be able to offer a range of quality, new services to our network members. This merger of two excellent organisations is a huge win for the community! Greg Page, CEO Heart of the Nation

Cardiac arrest is a significant health issue in Australia. Cardiac Arrest is when the heart stops beating, resulting in a person collapsing and not breathing. Response time is critical, and the person's best chance of survival is when bystanders recognise what is happening, and then **CALL, PUSH** and **SHOCK**. These tangible and life-saving actions are core elements of the **Chain of Survival**, and a clear framework that these like-minded and passionate organisations share.

This merger is significant because of the shared, lived experience from the impact that sudden cardiac arrest has had. MHF was initially established as a legacy to Michael Hughes who tragically passed away in 2013 from cardiac arrest at the age of 38. Likewise, HOTN was established following the high-profile survival of Greg Page, original member of The Wiggles, who survived a cardiac arrest during a concert in 2020. Greg's life was saved by a bystander applying CPR and the use of a nearby AED. Both organisations today represent many individuals and families who have experienced the trauma and grief of cardiac arrest. This provides unique and meaningful insights for our industry.

“We are immensely proud of the work and achievements MHF has produced over the past 7 years and we have always appreciated and respected the support we have received. The merger brings a synergy we think is exciting & we believe will provide greater outcomes to the opportunities we jointly bring. We are committed to maintain and grow a legacy to Michael Hughes who will continue to be an inspiration to our mission and values”. Kevin McSweeney, Chair, Michael Hughes Foundation

In NSW, HOTN and MHF have been at the forefront of this issue and have collaborated in the past, through a variety of activities including HOTN's Communities Program (*growing the network of defibrillators in residential communities*), and Government and industry programs including NSW AED Registration & Mapping Program with NSW Minister Customer Service Victor Dominello and the Australian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Alliance (AUSCAA).

Looking to the future, we intend to continue with the same ethos, work commitment and drive to further grow our operational capacity, governance, training, and education programs – as well as the continued commitment to community engagement programs currently being delivered by both charities.

At the heart of the work to be undertaken, community will be the key focus, supporting individuals to be more aware and confident to respond in medical emergencies, and there is so much more work to be undertaken.

For any enquiries on this merger, please contact Heart of the Nation – www.heartofthenation.com.au/contact

Greg Page
CEO, Heart of the Nation

Julie Hughes
Executive Manager, Michael Hughes Foundation



About Heart of the Nation

Heart of the Nation was borne from personal experience when its Founder, Greg Page, suffered a sudden cardiac arrest while performing as the original Yellow Wiggle at a concert in 2020. Fortuitously, due to a bystander applying CPR and the use of a nearby AED, Greg's life was saved.

Greg soon thereafter founded **Heart of the Nation**. The sole aim and focus of the charity, is to increase the awareness about Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in the community, as well as to equip the community with the skills and tools they need to respond appropriately to SCA where and when it occurs.

The programs that Heart of the Nation operate include increasing the visibility of AEDs in the community through providing bright yellow stickers to businesses and organisations that have an AED inside their business, to place on the front door or window of their premises to alert people know that there is an AED onsite.

Heart of the Nation also operates and maintains a national database of more than 7,000 AED locations, linked to an app that not only shows these locations, but also provides a bystander response feature that enables a registered user to alert an incident, and will not only call 000, but will notify nearby registered responders about the incident, alerting them to go and retrieve the nearest AED and bring it to the cardiac arrest. As such, we worked with the NSW Minister for Digital Government and Customer Service, Victor Dominello, and many other groups, to provide advice and guidance on the building of the NSW Government AED Register.

This program is integral to our "Heart of the Nation Communities" program, which aims to get more AEDs into residential areas. As part of this program, we oversee and/or manage the installation of the AED with the community, as well as provide CPR and AED education, and help them ensure that their AED is maintained with a logging system that is easy to use and confirms that their AED has been checked.

Together with many other programs and activities undertaken by Heart of the Nation, many of which are done collaboratively with other organisations in this space, we have been working for 2.5 years to increase awareness and improve bystander response, all culminating in efforts to increase survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest.

www.heartofthenation.com.au



About Michael Hughes Foundation

The Michael Hughes Foundation (MHF) is a purposeful Australian Charity and Social Enterprise, started in 2015, with a focus on the community response to cardiac arrest and with a mission to **Turn Bystanders Into First Responders** in all out of hospital medical events.

MHF was initially established as a legacy to **Michael Hughes** who lost his life to cardiac arrest in 2013, aged 38 years. His story is where our journey started, and he remains the key namesake for our organisation.

Through our programs, MHF is focussed on increasing the efficiency and community coordination of individuals when responding to cardiac arrest. Key frameworks that we apply in all of our projects include Basic Life Support (or commonly known as DRSABCD), the **Chain of Survival** and **HeartSafe Community** models.

Operating as a Social Enterprise, we provide a range of products and services that underpin our core mission. These include **AED Packages, AED Accessories, First Aid Kits, Accredited First Aid Training, and First Aid Auditing.**

Through our social enterprise operating model and our fundraising activities, MHF pays it forward to communities in need. We support a large range of communities from youth at risk, CALD communities, women and families experiencing domestic violence and the homeless.

The Foundation is a registered Charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission and is a certified Social Enterprise with Social Traders.

MHF has been awarded recognition of their work with the following achievements:

Rotary Paul Harris Fellow – Holroyd Rotary – Julie Hughes (2016)

Parramatta Citizen of the Year – Julie Hughes (2016) and Kevin McSweeney (2020)

Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence – Excellence in Social Enterprise – 2018 & 2019

NSW Business Chamber Business Awards – Excellence in Social Enterprise – 2019

WSU Women of the West Award – Business – Julie Hughes – 2021

www.mhf.life