

PRESS RELEASE

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OzChild President and champion for vulnerable children, young people, and families and people living with type one diabetes, recognised with Order of Australia

In recognition of her dedication to improving the health and well-being outcomes of others, Helen Maxwell-Wright AM has been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia today as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours list for 2021.

Kind, compassionate and generous with her time, Helen Maxwell-Wright AM has dedicated much of her life to improving the lives of others, but the honour of being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia is one Helen believes belongs to all who strive to help others.

“In a year that marks OzChild’s 170th anniversary I could not be prouder to represent all who strive every day to making a difference in the lives of others,” says Ms Maxwell-Wright AM.

Passionate about making a real and lasting difference and sincere in her desire to help, Helen has provided meritorious service throughout her career, both in paid and unpaid voluntary roles.

And a significant difference she has made. Spending more than 20 years in voluntary roles to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people through her work on the Board of OzChild, and to improving the lives of people with type one diabetes working with JDRF Australia.

“Helen’s self-less drive and determination has seen her contribute significantly to the organisations she serves through her vast experience in, and knowledge of marketing and communications, governance, and leadership and their application to improving lives,” says OzChild Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths.

Helen’s accomplishments are complimented by a solid track record in fundraising in the fields of child welfare and type one diabetes research funding and leading organisational transformation to influence change.

“Helen has also led the fundraising efforts over many years at OzChild and during this time raised more than \$3M to support the delivery of programs and services. Her leadership in Victoria, advocacy and fundraising for JDRF Australia have raised \$10M to fund cutting edge medical research,” explains Dr Griffiths.

As President of the OzChild Board, Helen was instrumental in leading the Board’s strategic investment in the introduction of evidence-based models to better support children, young people, and families with complex trauma, extreme behavioural challenges and those facing vulnerable times.

“Helen’s exceptional leadership during OzChild’s transformation to an evidence-based outcome focussed organisation has seen OzChild extend its reach into New South Wales, Queensland, and the ACT, supporting better outcomes for many hundreds more children and young people,” says Dr Griffiths.

Ms Maxwell-Wright AM recently addressed guests at Government House in Victoria who had gathered to mark OzChild’s 170th anniversary year, speaking about the history of the organisation and the difference being made.

“The evidence shows that our commitment to helping vulnerable families by delivering early intervention and prevention programs is changing lives. Since the inception of the evidence-based models in 2016 more than 1,200 families and 3,000 children and young people have been supported, preventing many hundreds, if not thousands of children from entering out-of-home care.

“And while the outcomes being achieved are making an incredible difference in the lives of many, we know there is still vital work to be done,” said Ms Maxwell-Wright AM.

Helen also values the immense contribution of OzChild foster and kinship carers and the important role they play in the child protection system, admiring the very self-less act they, and their families undertake to make a difference in the life of a vulnerable child.

“OzChild carers are truly remarkable, they do what many of us believe we can’t do, they have the courage and the strength of character to change a child’s life. There really is no greater act of selflessness,” says Ms Maxwell-Wright AM.

In 2021 Helen celebrates 20 years’ service to the OzChild board, serving for the past six years as President.

“I am overjoyed to see Helen recognised with an Order of Australia, her exemplary service and enormous contribution to improving the lives of others absolutely worthy of this recognition.

“Helen has a wealth of knowledge spanning the non-profit, health and commercial sectors, and has made an incredible difference to OzChild over the past 20 years, all members of the OzChild family feel extremely lucky to be able to learn from Helen, both personally and professionally,” said Dr Griffiths.

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- OzChild Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths is available for interview and photographs alongside Ms Helen Maxwell-Wright AM FAICD

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