**7 October 2021 IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAIRNS LOCALS HELP MAKE ARMANI’S WISH COME TRUE**

Right now, due to the impacts of COVID-19, Make-A-Wish Australia has more than 800 seriously ill children waiting for a wish.

The Wish Force volunteers at the Cairns branch of Make-A-Wish have been busy raising much needed funds to help make wishes come true.

Most recently they organised a quiz night fundraiser at the Salt House Cairns raising $1300, with prizes donated by generous local businesses.

 The funds raised go towards making wishes a reality for children like eight-year-old Armani, who suffers from a rare illness, Metachromatic Leukodystrophy.

After undergoing a stem cell transplant and chemotherapy, Armani’s condition has now stabilised, and she is able to be home with her family.

The chemotherapy unfortunately caused Armani to lose her mobility, but because of her courage and perseverance she is now walking with a walker and back at school with her friends.

Armani’s wish was to swim with dolphins, so Make-A-Wish organised for Armani and her family to travel to Sea World on the Gold Coast in June this year.

The Cairns branch volunteers organised a special wish presentation for Armani the week before her trip, including a visit to Cairns Aquarium.

Renai Wiber, Armani’s mother, said she can’t put into words how precious the wish trip was for Armani and her family.

“Whilst watching Armani swim with the dolphins, I was trying to hold back the tears, you could feel in the air how special the moment was,” said Renai, who plans to get a tattoo of a dolphin to remember the “magical” wish.

“I’m so thankful and appreciative of Make-A-Wish and all their volunteers, especially in Cairns. They were able to provide a glimmer of hope to my family, who have gone through such uncertain times. It has made an everlasting impact on my daughter and her happiness,” revealed Renai.

“Armani’s three brothers were so grateful to be able to spend quality time with their little sister, to see her smiling and having her wish come true.”

To date, the Cairns branch has granted over 100 life-changing wishes for sick children across the region and currently has another nine wishes waiting to be granted.

CEO of Make-A-Wish Australia, Sally Bateman, said volunteers play a vital role in making wishes come true.

“When you join our volunteer Wish Force, you become part of the world’s largest wish-granting charity – with endless opportunities to make a difference in the lives of sick children, their families and local communities,” said Ms Bateman.

“We hope by sharing Armani’s story and the amazing work of the Wish Force at our Cairns branch, we can highlight the lasting impact that wishes have on seriously ill children and their families.”

Wish fulfillments can range from welcoming a puppy to the family to being a super hero or going on a trip to the snow, every wish is as unique as the child who imagines it.

 The Make-A-Wish Cairns branch is currently seeking volunteers – for more information or to register your interest please visit: www.makeawish.org.au

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# About Make-A-Wish

Make-A-Wish Australia is part of the world’s largest wish-granting organisation and brings the local community together to grant the life-changing wishes of children with critical illnesses. Since 1985 it has delivered more than 10,000 unforgettable wishes to children around the country. From the incredibly humble to the seemingly impossible – the Wish Force has made unicorns fly, sent kids to the moon and even brought dinosaurs back from extinction. Over the past five years, Make-A-Wish Australia has led the world in the adoption of the Wish Journey, a carefully curated program which focuses on wish capture and design, building anticipation for each child ahead of their one true wish being realised. In December 2020, Make-A-Wish was incredibly proud to again place among Australia's most reputable charities.