



**BEANIE  
FOR BRAIN  
CANCER**

*10 years*

**ROUND 17  
25-28 JUNE**



Media Release  
Tuesday, 23 June

## **A DECADE OF HOPE: NRL BEANIE FOR BRAIN CANCER ROUND RETURNS FOR MILESTONE 10TH YEAR**

**BUY AN MHF BEANIE TO HELP TACKLE BRAIN CANCER | NRL ROUND 17: JUNE  
25 - 28**

### **THE BIG THREE TREK RETURNS: 150KM FROM SYDNEY TO NEWCASTLE**

The Mark Hughes Foundation (MHF) and the National Rugby League (NRL) will unite to celebrate a decade of Beanie for Brain Cancer Round in its milestone tenth year across Round 17 of the NRL Telstra Premiership from Thursday, June 25.

Now one of the most powerful and anticipated rounds on the rugby league calendar, Beanie for Brain Cancer Round brings together clubs, players, partners and fans across the country to raise vital funds and awareness for brain cancer through the purchase of the iconic MHF beanie — available online, at NRL matches and through select retail outlets.

This year's Round carries extra significance as the campaign celebrates ten years of the beanie movement — a concept created by former Nine NRL Executive Producer Matt Callander, whose vision continues to make a lasting impact following his passing from brain cancer in October 2017.

What began as a simple idea has grown into one of Australia's most recognised charity campaigns, helping transform the landscape for brain cancer research and patient support.

Since launching in 2017, more than one million MHF beanies have been sold, with the rugby league community contributing more than \$29 million to fund world-class research, specialist care and support services for brain cancer patients and families.

Adding to the momentum this year, **The Big Three Trek** will once again hit the road, with participants walking 150 kilometres from Sydney to Newcastle to raise awareness and continue driving support for the cause.

Every beanie sold helps bring us closer to better treatments, better support and ultimately, better outcomes for people impacted by brain cancer.

**NRL CEO Andrew Abdo**, said the tenth anniversary year of Beanie for Brain Cancer Round provides an opportunity to recognise the achievements of the first nine years and to carry the fight forward.

"During Beanie Round this year the Rugby League community will surpass \$30 million in funds raised through beanie sales and donations for MHF, which has directly contributed to significant advancements in brain cancer research in Australia.

“This support was critical in the establishment of the MHF Centre for Brain Cancer Research at the University of Newcastle and has enabled MHF to invest more than \$10 million in innovation grants that have supported 45 research projects and hundreds of researchers across Australia. Some of this work is now progressing to clinical trials – offering real hope and helping bring research outcomes to patients faster than ever before.

“The MHF and the Rugby League community is making a real difference for people fighting brain cancer.”

**MHF Co-Founder, Mark Hughes, said:** “Ten years ago, this started with an idea between two people determined to do something in the face of brain cancer. To see what it has become today is something I never could have imagined.

“This Round is about recognising every person who has stood beside us over the past decade — every supporter, every volunteer, every player, every club and every family who has helped drive real change in the fight against brain cancer.

“I feel incredibly grateful every day to meet people whose lives have been touched by the research, care and support this round helps make possible — but just as importantly, by the awareness it creates and the conversations it starts around brain cancer right across the country. That’s what Beanie Round is really about — giving hope where it’s needed most.

“We’ve achieved so much together, but there is still more to do. So put your beanie on this week, wear it proudly and know you’re helping make a real difference for Australians facing brain cancer.”

Sportsbet will continue its long running support by donating \$1000 for every try scored across the round.

“Reaching a decade of support for the Mark Hughes Foundation is a milestone everyone at Sportsbet is incredibly proud of,” **Sportsbet CEO, Doug Brown said.**

“What began as a simple commitment to donate \$1,000 for every try has now generated more than \$600,000 for brain cancer research, patient support and awareness.”

[Click here for new Beanie for Brain Cancer campaign video here](#)

Beanie For Brain Cancer Round 2026 features matches in Sydney, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Townsville, Canberra and Newcastle with beanies available for purchase at each match venue.

The annual Big Three trek will kick off Friday, June 26 - with a record 85 trekkers set to walk 150 kilometres from Sydney to Newcastle over three days, arriving at McDonald Jones Stadium for the clash between the Knights and Tigers Sunday afternoon.

Setting off this Saturday, June 27, 20 riders and support crew will begin an extraordinary 4,300km journey from Darwin to Bulga across 27 days, riding through three states in memory of three great mates lost to brain cancer — Dale Harris, Mick Ford and Paul Harris. Covering an average of 160km each day, Ridin 4 Mates is a remarkable journey driven by heart, grit and mateship — carrying hope for everyone impacted by brain cancer.

In a landmark announcement on June 10, the Mark Hughes Foundation committed \$18.9 million to expand its partnership with the University of Newcastle and accelerate the next generation of brain cancer research. Bringing MHF's total investment to more than \$36 million, the funding will support the translation of research into real-world treatments through the MHF Centre for Brain Cancer Research and further strengthen Australia's nationally connected approach to tackling one of the country's most challenging cancers.

In Australia, brain cancer kills more children than any other disease and more people under 40 than any other cancer. Supporters are being urged to help raise much needed funds by buying a beanie or donating to the Mark Hughes Foundation. More information is available at [markhughesfoundation.com.au](http://markhughesfoundation.com.au).

Beanies are also available from all Lowes Australia stores, participating IGA Australia and selected Woolworths stores.

### **Brain Cancer statistics**

- Survival rates have hardly increased over the last 35 years
- Kills more children under 10 than any other disease
- Only 2/10 people diagnosed will live more than 5 years
- Kills more adults under 40 than any other cancer
- One person every 5 hours is diagnosed in Australia

### **About MHF**

The Mark Hughes Foundation (MHF) is a charity formed in Newcastle by Mark and Kirralee Hughes following Mark's diagnosis with brain cancer in 2013. The Mark Hughes Foundation's mission is to raise much needed funds for research, to create awareness and support brain cancer patients and their families.

### **#MHFBeanie**

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