

Sophie Smith

2019 NSW Local Hero, Charity Founder, Author and Keynote Speaker

Sophie Smith has raised millions of dollars to help premature babies survive.

Driven by the death of her own triplets, she has raised the funds by running marathons and organising running teams that have competed in marathons around Australia and the world.

Open, inspiring and well-spoken, Sophie Smith shares her story of love, loss and survival with generosity and compassion. She talks about how tragedy can bring about change, drawing on her personal experience and the establishment of her registered charity, Running for Premature Babies.



More about Sophie Smith:

Sophie Smith and her late husband Ash began Running for Premature Babies (RFPB) in 2007, after their triplet sons - Henry, Jasper and Evan - died at Royal Hospital for Women, NSW of complications resulting from being born prematurely.

Henry was born at 21 weeks and lived for one hour. Evan and Jasper were born three weeks later, however Evan died of a brain haemorrhage at 10 days old, and Jasper of chronic lung disease at 58 days old.

Sophie and Ash went on to have two more boys, Owen and then Harvey, before Ash died of brain cancer in 2016.

Now a registered charity, Running for Premature Babies (RFPB) has raised over \$3.5 million dollars to help premature babies survive, buying specialised hospital equipment and helping fund research projects. RFPB supports the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital NICU as well as Sydney's Royal Hospital for Women and is looking to expand to support more NICUs around the country.

Funds continue to be raised via running and over 4000 people have now been part of the RFPB team. The charity's largest team to date, comprised 480 runners and was entered in the SMH Half-Marathon. Other marathons run that RFPB competes in are the New York and Chicago marathons, the Annapurna Marathon in Nepal, and the annual kids Fun Run, which is held on the triplets'

birthday.

Sophie Smith's memoir *Sophie's Boys*, directs all profits to the charity.

Sophie has been recognised in her local community and beyond with several awards that include a 2014 Australia Day Commendation; the 2016 Vi Robbins Volunteer of the Year; the 2017 Australia Day Community Service Award; and the 2018 Coogee Woman of the Year Award.

In 2019, Sophie was named the NSW Local Hero, in the 2019 Australian of the Year Awards.

Client testimonials

“ Sophie Smith's presentation of the formation and incredible work of Running for Premature Babies (RFPB) is as moving and heartfelt as it is brave. Sophie's story is one of positive, meaningful change born from tragedy, and her legacy is both enduring and growing. RFPB has raised over \$3million since 2007 and their work is saving children's lives. I encourage every organisation looking for an inspirational speaker from an impactful charity to hear Sophie's story. It is life-affirming in every way.

- **IMB Bank**

“ We had the pleasure of welcoming Sophie to address our annual Clinical Practice Improvement Conference Dinner, a gathering of neonatal professionals ranging from doctors, nurses and allied health workers who interact with the parents and stories of our tiniest and sickest hospital patients. Within moments Sophie had the audience captivated and moved - sharing her story of inspiration out of tragedy. Sophie is a gifted speaker who has the capacity to raise topics viewed as taboo or hard to talk about with dignity, compassion and purpose, this story needs to be shared.

- **Chair ANZNN and CPI Conference Convenor**

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