



Case Study

# JUICED TV'S POWERFUL IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL

How Juiced TV changed the hospital journey  
for **Max Shearer** and his family



4256

CHILDREN AND  
THEIR FAMILIES  
HAVE PARTICIPATED  
IN FILMING

281

EPISODES FILMED  
AND BROADCAST

4,600,000  
VIEWS

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The longer a child is in hospital, the more likely they are to be involved in a Juiced TV production.

*And when kids watch Juiced TV, they see other kids being funny and demystifying hospitals.*

*It probably does help them feel better, less anxious and manage pain better. But Juiced TV isn't about being sick. It's about being a kid. That's really empowering.”*

ANTHONY SHEARER, MAX'S DAD.



Max Shearer was admitted to the hospital in Brisbane at just ten years old. Within days, he'd been diagnosed with malignant brain tumours.

After multiple surgeries and a long recovery, Max was transferred to the newly opened Queensland Children's Hospital for chemotherapy.

And that's when Max discovered Juiced TV, watching episode after episode through long days of treatment.



## NEWS THAT NO FAMILY WANTS TO HEAR

When ten-year-old Max Shearer was taken to the Mater Children's Hospital emergency department, he was suffering intense headaches.

Within days, Max and his family were coming to terms with a serious diagnosis and imminent surgery. A CAT Scan revealed tumours growing on Max's brain—a rare cancer called ganglioglioma.

It has no cure.

Neurosurgery was needed to reduce the pressure on Max's brain with a second surgery to then remove the tumours. An anxious wait of nearly eight hours was followed by time in the paediatric intensive care unit and high-dependency unit.

After yet another emergency surgery, Max was well enough to transfer to the general surgical ward.

This was where Max would spend another six weeks, learning to walk and talk again.

***"I remember there were times when I was just stuck, the whole day, just sitting in a ward, sitting in a hospital bed. I wasn't feeling awesome obviously. I had lots of support, my family and friends were helping a lot. But it was still a really tough place to be. It was hard to stay positive."***

Max's memory of that long hospital stay is a little disjointed. But his father, Anthony, remembers it well.

***"It's a horrible experience. We had a child who was sick. And our other son, Dan, at home worrying about his brother being sick, and his parents being away."***

## FINDING FUN AND A POSITIVE FOCUS

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**I could see that people were going through similar things. They'd spent time in hospital. They knew what it was like.**

Two months after first arriving at the emergency department, Max was finally able to go home.

But he still faced many challenges.

In October that same year, Max started chemotherapy, spending a full day in hospital twice a week. Two months later, he was transferred to

Queensland's new children's hospital to complete his treatment. And it was here that Max discovered Juiced TV, watching the screen above his bed during chemotherapy.

During long days at the hospital, Max watched a lot of Juiced TV. Around him, children from as young as 6 to 17 years did the same.

*Watching Juiced TV is fun. It distracts you from everything. And I thought: 'I want to be like that, doing that stuff.'*

*With chemo, nothing makes it good. But Juiced TV makes it better."*

**Juiced TV is an Australian-first entertainment initiative that benefits the health and wellbeing of sick kids and their families, one episode at a time.**

Each week, the Juiced crew are on site creating a distraction from the hospital journey, filming activities with patients and siblings from craft, music and sports workshops, as well as doing profiles on hospital services and interviewing special guests.

The platform was launched in 2015 by Pip Forbes, after witnessing the impact positive experiences could have within the children's hospital community.

*"Children who are hospitalised can become socially isolated. When they come to hospital they lose a sense of control and their self-identity.*

*They're taken out of their normal life. They no longer have breakfast with their siblings or play with their friends at school.*

*I wanted to give these kids an experience they could share with their friends out of hospital. So they're no longer 'the sick kid' but 'the kid that met Thor'."*

PIP FORBES,  
FOUNDER AND MANAGING  
DIRECTOR OF JUICED TV





Despite ongoing treatment, Max decided to take on the challenge to run 10 km in Brisbane's Bridge to Brisbane fun run and raise money to help other kids with cancer.



## WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Over a couple of months, Max raised nearly \$40,000 for the Queensland Children's Tumour Bank, an important resource for cancer researchers.

To date, he has achieved over \$100,000 in donations through his running and awareness raising.

At the Queensland Children's Hospital, word about Max's efforts reached the Juiced TV team and they wanted to capture and share this incredible achievement. ***It was just such a worthwhile story of courage and overcoming adversity.***

It was the first of many times that Max worked with Juiced TV.

*"Juiced TV doesn't ask what you can or can't do. They ask what you want to do. It makes you feel incredible. Awesome. So you can enjoy yourself in hospital. Which is really difficult."*

Max has since helped produce several Juiced TV episodes, including a cooking show, reading the weather for Channel Nine's The Today Show, interviewing professional boxer Jeff Horn, and hosting a tour of the Queensland Children's Tumour Bank.

*"They'd take you outside the hospital and it would be fun to film and act. It made you forget about everything you'd gone through. Made you feel like a superstar, like there's nothing you couldn't conquer."*

*Hosting felt pretty awesome—like I was on a proper Masterchef show. It was so much fun to be a part of. And my brother Dan was part of it. A lot of siblings were involved, they got to have interviews."*

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**It was just such a worthwhile story of courage and overcoming adversity.**

*I asked Max if I could run with him, and that's when I first met the family. Max embodies everything that we want Juiced TV to be and how we want people to feel after engaging with us.*

*Juiced TV is about so much more than making an entertaining TV show. That's the end product, and we know it has an incredible impact. But how we create the show is just as important."*

PIP FORBES, FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF JUICED TV

## CONNECTING WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Juiced TV had a real impact on Max, as well as his family. With the support of the Juiced community, the emotions and challenges of adjusting to hospital life were eased.

Anthony, Max's dad, says Juiced TV was a breath of fresh air.

***"It's child-centred and family-centred."***

***One of the things that Juiced TV does by having kids involved, is it normalises illness as something that can happen to kids.***

***The kids are still sick, but Juiced focuses on them, not their illness.***

***It's wonderful to see your child being strong and powerful, even when they're really sick. And Dan loved Juiced because it helped Max, but it was also inclusive of him."***

Thanks to Juiced TV, Max has also made friends. Friends in the hospital that he continues to watch on Juiced TV at home.

***"Their hospital experiences haven't been similar to mine. They've had completely different experiences. But we can connect through Juiced. That was what we had in common. We'd spent time in hospital and escaped it through Juiced TV."***

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## HERE'S HOW JUICED TV HELPS KIDS AND FAMILIES:

- ✓ Distracts from pain and stress
  - ✓ Normalises injury and illness
  - ✓ Builds confidence and self-esteem
  - ✓ Improves physical and mental wellbeing
  - ✓ Strengthens social connectedness and belonging
  - ✓ Provides comfort and peace of mind
  - ✓ Builds shared understanding
  - ✓ Provides happiness and fun
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**"Juiced TV provides entertainment and distraction, which can have a profound effect on a child's recovery process.**

***It also helps build their confidence and understanding of what's happening to them in hospital. Children's Hospital Foundation is proud to help make services like Juiced TV possible, to improve the health and wellbeing of patients and families."***

**NICK VAN DYKE, PATIENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT DIRECTOR  
AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION**





## INSPIRATION AND SUPPORT INTO THE FUTURE

Now, Max is in Year 11. He's thinking about university and already knows that his studies will lead him back to Juiced TV.

***"I'd like to get an internship at Juiced TV, and eventually a job. I think it might help kids in hospital, to meet someone who understands."***

Driving Max's ambition is his memory of the weeks he spent in hospital before he was introduced to Juiced TV.

***"Being in hospital was really tough. You don't have power. Everything is out of your hands. Everything that happened to me, I didn't have a say about that. You feel disempowered. That there's nothing you can do to change what's happening at the moment. You feel lonely. And you feel weak."***

***I think that if I'd been able to switch on a TV and see kids like me, it would have made a real difference. There's a lot of segments about dealing with hospitals. If I'd seen that when I was first in hospital, it would have helped me a lot.***

***When I was in hospital, and I had to learn about cancer and tumours, I lost my childhood. I had to grow up fast.***

***Juiced TV lets you hold onto some of your childhood."***

Max is still a patient at the Queensland Children's Hospital. He still has 5 brain tumours in his brain and attends regular appointments to monitor its growth.

In 2018, he was presented with Juiced TV's Hall of Fame award—not for being a star on the show, but for embodying the values of Juiced TV and being a role model for children in and out of hospital.

And there's no stopping what he'll do next.

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**We want to revolutionise the way kids and their families experience hospital.**

***Using our unique platform, we can distract, entertain and empower sick kids. We can help them connect and maintain their sense of community, despite being in hospital.***

***We'll always consider Max a part of our Juiced family."***

**PIP FORBES, FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF JUICED TV**

Want to help Juiced TV make a bigger impact? Visit the Juiced TV website to find out more about bringing Juiced TV into your hospital or make a donation.

**[juicedtv.com.au](http://juicedtv.com.au)**