

## Olivia Anderson, partner of footy legend Shane Crawford, back St Kilda Mums push

Jordy Atkinson, Port Phillip Leader

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OLIVIA ANDERSON knows all too well the ups and downs of daily life as a new mum.

The busy Brighton mum of four and partner of AFL legend Shane Crawford was drawn to St Kilda Mums after she read about the charity's work in the *Leader* years ago.

She has thrown her support — and 2646 Instagram followers — behind St Kilda Mums' Push for Prams campaign.

“For new mums with more than one baby, being without a pram is sort of like living without a car,” she said.



“When we had our twins, if I couldn’t walk somewhere we just didn’t go, it was so much harder to get out and about.

“It’s hard enough being a new mum, I can’t imagine being in a physically or emotionally hard situation as well.”



📷 Olivia Anderson with her sons Ben, 8, Harry, 5, Charlie, 11 and Jack, 5. Picture: Josie Hayden

Between ferrying her boys — Charlie, 11, Ben, 8, and five-year-old twins Jack and Harry — between school, kinder, sport and play dates, Anderson regularly volunteers at St Kilda Mums’ Vale St warehouse.

“Every time I go I try and take about 10 mums through with me,” she said.

“They need a lot of hands on deck and I try and help out as much as I can.”



📷 Olivia Anderson is a supporter of the St Kilda Mums charity. Picture: Josie Hayden



📷 Olivia Anderson with her partner, former footy star Shane Crawford. Picture: Sarah Matray

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Anderson, who created the popular blog [Flat Out Mum](#), has also donated the two double prams she used to tote her bubs around in to the charity.

“Through Flat Out Mum I often get given products like car seats and prams and they always end up at St Kilda Mums,” she said.

“I like to stick to one charity and do as much as I can for them as opposed to spreading the love thinly everywhere.”

A *Bad Moms* movie night Anderson organised last year raised \$3500 for the St Kilda Mums, enabling them to buy much-needed nursery items.

“They told us exactly what they spent that money on; you can see what



they've bought with the money and imagine what impact that's had and that's appealing to me," she said.

"So much love goes into what they do and when they hand over those bundles of clothes, it's like something you would give your best friend; it's not tatty old hand-me-downs."

St Kilda Mums chief executive Jessie Macpherson said over the past 12 months more than 2000 prams had been rehomed across the charity's three bases in St Kilda, Geelong and Ballarat and more were needed to help a growing waiting list of new and expectant mums.

"With Push for Prams our target is to get 500 prams and that's just three months' worth of stock," she said.

Ms Macpherson said the 500 prams would cost \$75,000 to buy.

"We're all about recycling and sustainability too, so if we can save \$75,000 and rescue 500 prams that were destined for landfill, that's a great result," she said.

"We don't want hard rubbish prams, we want those people who have got that beautiful pram sitting in storage to donate it so we can help other mums. It's important people understand that pram could be very, very valuable to a family in need."

St Kilda Mums is also calling for cash donations to help buy double, triple and quad prams.

"It's not uncommon (for mums on the waiting list) to have a one-year-old, a two-year-old and twins on the way," Ms Macpherson said.

She said a donation of \$150 would provide a pram suitable for a newborn.



📷 Olivia Anderson was inspired to get involved with the St Kilda Mums charity after reading a Leader story about it. Picture: Josie Hayden

## **CASE STUDY: TRIPLETS CHALLENGE**

LOOKING at the bouncing Stojcevski triplets, it's difficult to imagine the struggles their parents faced bringing them into the world.

At 17, mum Ayse Stojcevski battled severe endometriosis and was told she may never have children.

Years later, her chances of conceiving were further dashed when her husband, Bob, was diagnosed with testicular cancer in 2015.

But the Stojcevkis beat near impossible odds to naturally conceive triplets.



📷 Bob and Ayse Stojcevski with their triplets Derya, Sofija and Azra. Picture: Josie Hayden

Incorrectly told by doctors in Kazakhstan — where her husband was attending conferences — she had miscarried at five weeks, Mrs Stojcevski struggled on through a difficult and dangerous pregnancy and gave birth to Derya, Azra and Sofija six weeks premature.

“I was convinced I was still pregnant, I just felt different,” she said.

“I went to a different doctor ... and she congratulated us and said ‘you are pregnant, sorry about the mix-up, and it’s actually identical twins’.”

Minutes later, doctors were gathered around the ultrasound screen muttering in Russian and laughing, leaving the Stojcevkis utterly perplexed.

“They called in more senior doctors who told us there were actually three babies in there,” she said.

“I was having an anxiety attack thinking ‘what do you mean I’m having three babies?’

“I was just told I had a miscarriage and now I’m being told it’s triplets.”

Mrs Stojcevski got on a flight back to Melbourne where doctors confirmed the against-all-odds triplets.

Three months in to the tumultuous pregnancy, Mrs Stojcevski was categorised by the Royal Women’s Hospital as a high-risk pregnancy when one of the triplets, Azra, failed to thrive in the womb.

“I was getting checks every two weeks at first, then every week, then every two or three days,” she said.

“We were told we’d probably only make 24 weeks and lots of doctors said we’d be lucky to go home with three babies; we’d be lucky to even go home with one.”

And the growing family was dealt another blow when, 24 weeks into the pregnancy, Mr Stojcevski was told his cancer had returned.

The couple spent their days going between appointments at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the Royal Women’s.

That’s when St Kilda Mums stepped in to help them deal with “the hardest time” in their lives.

“We were both unemployed; Bob obviously had to leave work and I was on bed rest and couldn’t walk around,” Mrs Stojcevski said.

“A social worker from the Caroline Chisholm Society contacted St Kilda Mums, who donated cots, a pram, car seats, clothes, blankets, change tables — whatever you can think of for babies, they gave it to us.

“There were many things we couldn’t manage on our own; we were struggling financially and had limited stuff we could get from friends and family, but with their help it was one less thing we needed to stress about.

“They really, really helped us in the hardest time of our lives.”

Mrs Stojcevski said the triple pram provided by the St Kilda-based charity was crucial to her mental wellbeing.

“I need to be able to go out on my own and I can’t push two prams.

“It still requires a lot of effort but I can take the girls to the park and their doctors’ appointments because of this triple pram,” she said.

“(Triple prams) are about \$2000 new and \$1000 second-hand and I cannot afford that; I wouldn’t have one still if (St Kilda Mums) hadn’t given one to me.

“I don’t know how it would be without a triple pram — it would be hell.”

Next month the charity launches its Push for Prams campaign, which aims to help new mothers in desperate need.

The *Leader* has thrown its support behind the campaign which aims to secure 500 prams during September for the St Kilda Mums to distribute to disadvantaged families facing challenges including unemployment, low household income, disability and mental health issues.

Despite two of the girls weighing 1.9kg each at birth and little Azra just 1.5kg, the “miracle babies”, who have just celebrated their first birthdays, are now thriving and their dad is back in remission again.

“The girls are growing up and they’re all happy, cheeky little characters,” Mrs Stojcevski said.

“Bob’s chemo finished a couple of weeks after the girls were born and he’s almost been a year clear of cancer.

“Slowly, slowly we’re just trying to get back into everything.”

Find out more at [stkildamums.org](http://stkildamums.org).



SERIOUS TRIPLET DOESN'T FIND PEEKABOO FUNNY

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