



SUPPORTING YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH



youthfocus



annual report
2023-24



**SUPPORTING YOUTH
MENTAL HEALTH**

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Youth Focus acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Western Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





**AT YOUTH FOCUS, OUR VISION IS FOR
A WORLD WHERE A YOUNG PERSON'S
MENTAL HEALTH DOES NOT GET IN THE WAY
OF THEM BEING WHO THEY WANT TO BE.**

We're committed to ensuring every individual who interacts with us feels safe and is able to bring their whole selves, being welcomed with equity, dignity and respect. In doing so, we understand that we must first include, listen and reflect in order to build trust, connect and partner.

We celebrate individuality and are guided by the stories and journeys of the communities in which we live and work.

Everyone is welcome
at Youth Focus.



message from our chair and ceo



As we closed out the financial year, Youth Focus turned thirty on 4 May 2024.

Significant milestones like this are an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved, and to look forward to what's ahead.

We are immensely proud of our work over the past thirty years. From our humble beginnings as a small charity founded by Ronald Woss AM and Peter Fitzpatrick, we've grown to become a respected and trusted provider of evidence-based mental health services in WA, supporting tens of thousands of young people and their families over the decades.

Much has changed in that time. As a society, we are now talking more about our mental health and slowly reducing the stigma. But young people are experiencing higher rates of mental ill-health than ever before, and more than 40% won't reach out for help when they need it.

We may not have all the answers, but thirty years of experience and expertise - working with others, and listening to young people and their families and carers - we know what can make a difference.

It's not revolutionary. It's about making it easy for young people to access the support they need when they first experience mental health challenges; putting their needs and goals at the centre; and working with others to provide a wrap-around approach to service delivery.

And that's what we've been working towards over the past year. We're now a year into delivering our 2023-2026 strategic plan, *Thriving Together*, and progress has been made across all our pillars.

We've been working with communities to find new and innovative ways to deliver our core services and increase accessibility for young people. This looks different for each region, from expanding our outreach program in Geraldton, to piloting a project in partnership with First Nations communities in the Great Southern.

Thanks to a generous \$1.4million grant from Lotterywest, we're extending the services and support we can provide in the Mid West through the expansion of our Geraldton centre. This builds on our success in integrating Youth Focus services with our headspace Albany centre in the Great Southern, where there have been significant reductions in wait-times, expanded services, and greater collaboration with other service providers. In line with ensuring our growth is deliberate, sustained and considered, we're exploring other opportunities to expand and evolve our service models to better support young people, where and when they need it.

A key piece of work during the past financial year has been developing our outcomes measurement framework. We want to make sure that the work we are doing is delivering real outcomes - not only for young people but also for their communities, and our society as a whole. This comprehensive project has involved many hours of workshopping with staff, young people and carers, and we're excited about where this work is leading us. We look forward to being able to implement some of these measures in the coming twelve months.

Of course, we haven't done this on our own. Working with others - connecting and collaborating - is a core part of how we work, and what has driven us over the past thirty years. We value these partnerships, and the shared commitment to capacity building, knowledge-sharing, and most importantly, making a real difference for the young people we work with and for.





Thank you so much to the many sector and service organisations, Elders and First Nations communities, our corporate partners and community fundraisers, government at all levels, the communities we are part of, and of course, the young people and their support networks who have worked with us this year. From joint submissions and co-designed projects, to new memorandums of agreement and whole-of-community events - none of the achievements and initiatives documented in this annual report would be possible without you.

We are also very grateful for the ongoing governance of our Board of Directors, who have continued to guide us so ably as we grow and transform as an organisation. As CEO and Board Chair, we truly value the support, expertise, experience, and personal commitment that each of our Board members brings to the table.

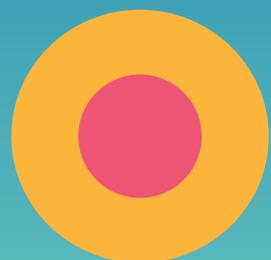
Of course, there would be nothing to report on without our people. We are immensely proud of the passionate, talented people who work with us. Some of them have been recognised for their work over the past year with awards, invitations to share their expertise and experience on the national stage, or through representation on government and sector working groups and committees to help shape policy. Even more go about their work without accolades, but with a passion and drive to make a difference in the lives of young people. We thank each and every one of our staff for all that they do.

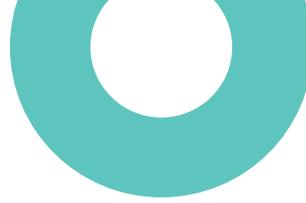
Creating a workplace where our people feel supported, empowered and valued no matter who they are or what their role is, is incredibly important to us. This year, we were proud to be recognised as an Inclusive Employer by the Diversity Council of Australia, and also increase the number of females in leadership positions, with our gender pay gap now tracking at under 1% against 4.2% which was published for the first time by the Federal Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

We have learnt so much over the past thirty years, and continue to be inspired by the resilience, determination and bravery of young people. There's much to look forward to over the next twelve months as we take further steps towards evolving the way we work to provide more effective support and services for young people in Western Australia.

DERRY SIMPSON
CEO, Youth Focus

ROD JONES
Chair, Youth Focus,
Board of Directors





about us

CHAMPIONING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN WA

Mental illness is the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes for young people in WA.

For thirty years, Youth Focus has worked to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young Western Australians.

We believe in the potential of all young people, and that the right support can change the trajectory of a young person's life. We're here to help create a world where a young person's mental health does not get in the way of them being who they want to be.

At Youth Focus we aim to create a community in which young people feel safe reaching for support, and that high-quality services are available when they do. We help shape and enable communities that

promote mental wellbeing and support young people in all aspects of their lives. The current challenges within the youth mental health space are considerable and complex, and the need for evidence-based, accessible services is growing rapidly. As Western Australia's largest youth specialist non-government provider of mental health services, we see firsthand the scale of the youth mental health crisis.

This report provides an overview of the services and support we have provided to young people and their communities in Western Australia during 2023-24, and the impact our work is having on helping young people thrive.



OUR VISION

A world where a young person's mental health does not get in the way of them being who they want to be.



OUR PURPOSE

Trusted to champion the mental health needs of young people in WA, supporting them to thrive in their community.

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS



ACCESSIBILITY

We will deliver a high-quality, safe and consistent service for young people, across our locations and tailored to community needs

IMPACT

We will make a measurable difference. We are committed to demonstrating the credibility, value and meaningful impact of our services



PARTNERSHIPS

Our impact is greater when we collaborate with others. With mutual respect, we partner to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people

SUSTAINABILITY

We will continue to build our capacity - in our people, practice and resources - so we can deliver on our purpose now and into the future





OUR VALUES

COMPASSION



WE SHOW HEART

We are passionate about our cause and committed to the wellbeing of our clients, teammates, and communities.

COLLABORATION



WE COLLABORATE

We are motivated towards a common goal knowing that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they work together.

DYNAMIC



WE ARE DYNAMIC

We are adaptable, open to change and evolution, holding focus on our work through the transitions we face.

INTEGRITY



WE CAN BE COUNTED ON

We are clear, honest, and authentic when we communicate. Those around us have trust and confidence in who we are and what we do.

QUALITY



WE HAVE A REAL, MEANINGFUL IMPACT

We remain focused on our organisation's purpose. It drives us to be and do our best.



OUR PEOPLE

One of the greatest strengths of Youth Focus is our people.

We welcome and respect our staff (and everyone we interact with) as individuals with their own unique strengths and stories to share.

These different experiences, skills and perspectives come together to deliver on our purpose of supporting young people with their mental health.

In November 2023, we were proud to be recognised as an Inclusive Employer by the Diversity Council of Australia (DCA). In our third Diversity and Inclusion Survey conducted in August 2023, 98% of staff responded that they worked in an inclusive team environment, compared to an average across the Australian workforce of 81% and DCA members of 91%.

For the first time, the Federal Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) published gender pay gaps for more than 5,000 organisations. Our gender pay gap was 4.2% (taking into account superannuation and other allowances), however since this data was collected in February 2023, the number of women in leadership positions had increased to 66% from 47% the year prior, and by the time the data was published in February 2024, our gender pay gap was tracking at under 1%.



While the WGEA data is a useful piece of information in tracking our organisational progress in pursuit of a more diverse and inclusive workplace, our focus is on the overall experience of inclusion and consistency for those working at Youth Focus.

We're very proud of some of the initiatives we've progressed during 2023-24 to support a more inclusive workplace, and to continue to build the capacity of our workforce including:

- Implementing policies and procedures on Flexible Working Arrangements, Time off in Lieu, Parental Leave and Study Leave;
- Developing a Family and Domestic Violence Staff Support Guide, with comprehensive training for all staff delivered by Zonta House;

- Providing high-quality training, professional development and opportunities for informal reflection for our people on topics that are relevant to our work with young people, but also of importance to us as individuals within our own communities, including family and domestic violence, cultural safety; and issues impacting LGBTQIA+ people;
- Using feedback mechanisms, such as experience surveys, exit interviews and the Diversity and Inclusion Survey to understand the staff experience of inclusion.

ABOUT OUR PEOPLE



- 145** Staff
- 47%** Full-time staff
- 51%** Part-time staff
- 66%** Leadership positions are held by women
- 60%** Under the age of 40
- 24%** Identify as LGBTQIA+
- 3.5%** First Nations people
- 14%** Live with a disability
- 23%** Multilingual, with 19 different languages spoken + 30 cultural groups were represented overall
- 30%** Born overseas
- 40%** Have caring responsibilities



in focus

TAKING TO THE NATIONAL STAGE

As a headspace lead agency for four locations in WA (Midland, Northam, Geraldton and Albany), our Youth Focus team took part in the headspace National Forum 2024 in Brisbane in May 2024.

A number of our staff were invited to present at the Forum, and participate in panel discussions, sharing their experience and expertise on topics including cultural governance, supporting early career staff, data informed care, integrating work and study and mental health support in centres, amongst others.

The Forum was a valuable opportunity for our staff to connect with the wider headspace network and others passionately working in the youth mental health sector. Our Midland team also won the Youth Participation Initiatives Award for their forum showcase, which highlighted the outstanding work with their Youth Reference Group and Our Place Youth Committee.



our impact

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We supported 3,707 young people, with 22,290 occasions of service.

Youth Focus believes in the potential of all young people, and that the right support, at the right time, can change the trajectory of a young person's life.

The services we provide are tailored to meet the individual needs of young people and their families.

In measuring the impact of our services, the data only tells part of the story. What 'success' looks like will differ for each young person – for some it will be reaching out for help, for others it might be securing employment.

REDUCED PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

YOUTH FOCUS 47%

INDUSTRY STANDARD 36%

IMPROVEMENT →

A key focus over the past financial year has been on looking at ways in which we can truly measure the impact of our support and services beyond capturing quantitative data. We've spent much of the past year working closely with our staff, young people, carers and our service partners to better understand the individual, organisational and societal outcomes of our work, and developing ways to measure these outcomes. You can read more about this project on page 12.

ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN DAY TO DAY LIFE

YOUTH FOCUS 47%

INDUSTRY STANDARD 37%

IMPROVEMENT →

We have started implementing these measures and look forward to reporting on the outcomes in our next annual report.

We've also utilised platforms and opportunities, like the headspace National Forum, to demonstrate our expertise and position ourselves as leaders in operating integrated models of care.



WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT US...

Thank you (counsellor) for being a consistent source of support and validation throughout the hardest moment of my life, I appreciate you more than I can express
YOUNG PERSON

I felt heard
YOUNG PERSON

Youth Focus has been the best thing for me, I really am benefiting from it
YOUNG PERSON



ACCOLADES & RECOGNITION IN 2023-24

- Youth Focus recognised as an Inclusive Employer, Diversity Council Australia
- headspace Midland: Diversity Award for Our Place Youth Committee initiative at WA Mental Health Awards 2023; Youth Participation Initiatives Award at the headspace National Forum
- Katrina and Cassandra Hon, headspace Midland Youth Reference Group Members: Finalists for the 2023 WA Youth Awards' Mercy Care Positive Achievement Award
- Professor Ashleigh Lin, Board Member: Minister's Award at WA Mental Health Awards 2023
- Andrew Wenzel, Service Manager headspace Albany: Finalist for Mental Health Employee or Volunteer Excellence Award at WA Mental Health Awards 2023
- Christina Matthews, Board Member: Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division; Business Award at the Western Australian of the Year Awards 2024
- Youth Focus Meekatharra (Walk for Suicide Awareness): Event of the Year at the Meeka Community Awards 2023
- Paulette Anderson, Service Manager Youth Focus Meekatharra: Community Choice Award at the Meeka Community Awards 2023
- headspace Albany: Semi-finalists WA Community Achievements Award for Awards Australia Charitable Foundation Mental Health and Wellbeing Award

(Counsellor) is an amazing listener and has helped me learn to break out of negative thought spirals and practice a way of thinking that really helps

YOUNG PERSON

I appreciate the pacing each session follows and the topics we gradually cover

YOUNG PERSON

I enjoyed the BEST program for parents. It was great to be in a space with other parents and young people. It was good for both me as the parent, but also good for my young person to hear from other young people. It was good to be in a safe space to work through things with my young person

PARENT



in focus

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

One of the key strategic pillars in our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is impact – our commitment to making a measurable difference, and demonstrating the credibility, value and meaningful impact of our services.

In line with this, Youth Focus are progressing in how we understand and measure the outcomes and impact of our services for young people, their families and communities. In doing so, we aim to ultimately improve our services for young people and deepen our impact.

This new endeavour, led by Service Development and Evaluation Officer, Ellie began with our Albany and Geraldton teams taking part in service-level workshops to develop program logic models. Program logic is a service planning and evaluation tool which visually shows the relationship between the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of a service. The workshops involved each team taking a step back and identifying the key outcomes and impacts of their work, and how to measure them.

We wanted to also hear directly from young people about the outcomes and impacts that they have experienced through our support, so we co-designed a workshop with Youth Reference Group (YRG) members at headspace Midland. The collaborative workshop included young people from across WA, who raised some key points, including the importance of building trust, improving understanding of mental health and learning skills to manage everyday life. This feedback is helping us make sure that the outcomes that we're focusing on align with what is important to young people.

Workshop co-designer and headspace Midland YRG Member, Cassandra said, "The workshop was done with and for young people, putting lived experience perspectives at the forefront of our work. As we now work on developing an Outcome Measurement Framework, I want to thank all young people for their invaluable contributions to ensure the services at Youth Focus continue to be accessible and relevant for young people across WA."

The outcomes and impacts identified by these workshops, and our feedback mechanisms, will inform the development of Youth Focus' first Outcome and Impact Measurement Framework, a robust, evidence-based model that will guide our work in this area into the future.







our services

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE WHO THEY WANT TO BE



Young people can access our services at no cost to them or their carers, and without referral.



There is no one-size-fits-all approach to mental health services. We are led by the young person and what they need in their mental health journey, based on what they want to achieve in their lives, in that moment.

Our services include:

- Counselling – at our locations, by tele-health, in schools, and in community
- Work and study support
- Mental health education programs
- Mentoring programs
- Community engagement
- Early psychosis support
- Eating disorders program
- Postvention support in communities following suicides and other crises

Our model of care empowers young people to make decisions about the type, frequency, and modality of services to best meet their needs. In late 2023, after consultation and development with young people, we released our Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy. This document supports our Statement of Commitment to Youth Safety and Wellbeing, and outlines the responsibilities we all share to ensure that the young people we interact with are safe, well and empowered.

Many of our services are focused on early intervention. By working with young people at the beginning of their mental health journey, the research suggests that we can reduce the likelihood of a mental health challenge developing into a more complex, long-term disorder.

In April 2024, we were awarded a \$1.4million Lotterywest grant to refurbish our existing service location in Geraldton to create a youth hub, which will provide greater opportunities for service collaboration and increase accessibility to our services in the region. Work will commence in the next financial year, and it is anticipated it will be opened in 2025. This reflects our own experience, as well as evidence-based research, that integrated models are more accessible, and deliver greater benefits for young people and their communities.

We are looking to extend this model of care to the Perth metropolitan area in 2025.

A SNAPSHOT OF OUR SERVICE DELIVERY

3,707

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED

22,290

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE



INCLUDING WORK & STUDY SUPPORT

209

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED



INCLUDING EARLY PSYCHOSIS SUPPORT

95

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED



MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION & COUNSELLING

1,846

PARTICIPATED IN MENTAL NOTES

84

YOUNG PEOPLE SECURED EMPLOYMENT

3,783

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

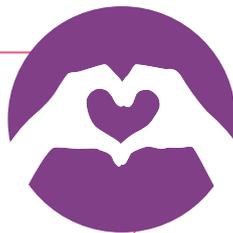


COUNSELLING IN

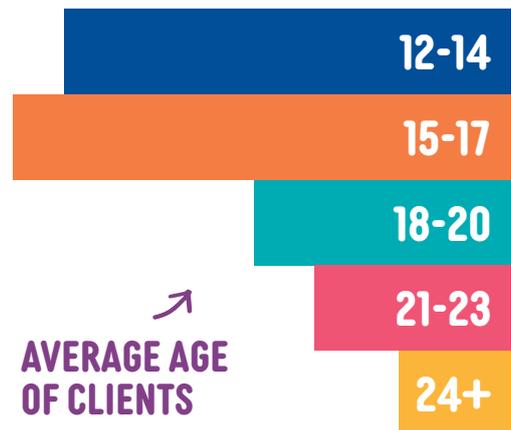
48

SCHOOLS

ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SUPPORT



- 55% Female
- 29% Male
- 6% Gender diverse
- 20% Identify as LGBTQIA+
- 12% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 41% Live in Perth metro area
- 59% Live in regional and remote WA



AVERAGE AGE OF CLIENTS



OUR SERVICES



COUNSELLING



3,707 young people supported
22,290 occasions of service
Counselling provided in 48 schools

The role of our counselling is to empower a young person to get what they need as quickly as possible, with minimal disruption to their life.

Focused on developing the strengths and unique abilities of the young person (and those who support them) to overcome their mental health challenges, counselling is provided by qualified clinicians online or in-person, at our locations, online, or in school.

More than half of the young people supported by Youth Focus see their counsellor at their school. Being part of the school communities helps us to build trust and relationships with young people, and also helps support vulnerable population groups and communities who may not otherwise be supported.

Counselling is also provided in group sessions through programs like Wise Minds and the BEST program, which are outlined later in this report.

We've continued to embed Single Session Thinking into our practice, which has reduced wait times for a young person to see a counsellor.

Single Session Thinking puts the young person and their needs and goals first, and the approach treats each session as if it may be the only one needed, although it leaves open the opportunity to book in a future session if the young person would like additional support.

As part of counselling, a young person may also be referred to our Individual Placement and Support program if they have specific work or study goals they want to achieve.



MOST COMMON REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS OUR SERVICES



- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling anxious
- Problems with family or friends
- Suicidal ideation
- Thoughts that bother me
- Stress
- Emotional regulation



in focus

SUPPORTING YOUNG WESTERN AUSTRALIANS THANKS TO TELETHON

For over two decades, Telethon, through the generosity of the Western Australian community, has provided funding which has allowed us to deliver vital mental health support services to young Western Australians when and where they need it.

From January to June 2024, the funds provided by Telethon have enabled Youth Focus to directly support 244 young people through 999 occasions of service and have indirectly benefited approximately 22,000 young people, in schools across the Metro area, Peel and South West.

By the end of the year, thanks to this grant, we'll have supported over 400 young people. Telethon funding has enabled us to increase the amount of counselling support we can provide, which has meant we are now able to reach a geographical area of approximately 22,500km².

Hampton Senior High School is one school benefitting from Telethon funding, enabling Youth Focus to deliver counselling services every week, connecting students with study and work opportunities, and taking part in school and community events.



"We have partnered with Youth Focus for more than seven years, and the high-quality mental health support they deliver to our students is greatly needed and highly valued," said Tracy Griffiths, Principal at Hampton Senior High School.

"Without access to Youth Focus counselling in our school, we know that there would be a large number of students who would not have access to support from any other avenues. It is vital to us to keep Youth Focus at our school, and we are grateful for the support from Telethon to help ensure this partnership can continue for many years."

Thank you to Telethon, and thank you to all Western Australians who gave so generously to make this impact possible.



OUR SERVICES

WORK & STUDY SUPPORT

209 young people participated in IPS
84 young people secured employment

One of the important services we provide is supporting young people with their employment and study goals through our Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program.

Mental health can be an enormous barrier to employment for young people, yet finding meaningful employment can be one of the most effective preventative factors against the recurrence of mental ill-health.

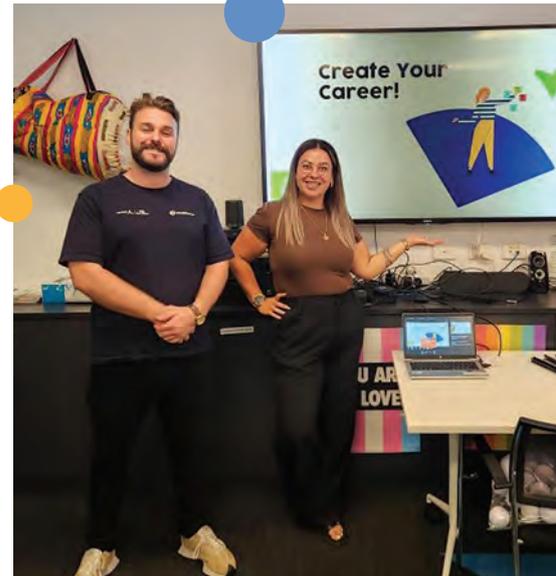
Our IPS program is provided at Youth Focus Perth Metro, headspace Albany, headspace Geraldton, and headspace Midland, although all our locations understand and value the importance of employment and study options for a young person's mental health. Where we don't run a dedicated IPS program, we utilise other vocational services.

The young people who participate through IPS are referred by our counsellors who are supporting them with their mental health, and it's this clinical integration that sets us apart from other employment services.

Our IPS teams provide the full range of employment services including intake, engagement, career profile, financial counselling, job search, job coaching, and other job supports, including providing support to maintain work when there may be some challenges, and educating about how they can talk about their mental health in the workplace. Our IPS teams often meet the young people in the community, working to remove barriers that might prevent a young person from being able to access our services.

Young people across our locations face different barriers in securing employment or study opportunities, from accessing affordable driving lessons and having a reliable car, finding affordable housing, or living in regions where there is only seasonal and tourism-driven employment.

The goal is to secure meaningful placements based on what a young person wants to do. During the past financial year, our IPS teams have worked closely with many employers across the State, successfully securing employment for young people in diverse roles including Art Curator, Pool Technician, Disability Support Worker, Personal Assistant, Parts Dismantler, Party Host, Apprentice Mechanic, Parcel Sorter, and Therapeutic Carer.



Over the past year, we've seen how the cost-of-living crisis is impacting young people, with increasing numbers of young people - including school-aged children - wanting to gain employment so they can financially help their families with the household expenses. We've also noticed more young people being disengaged from school following the disruption and anxiety created by the COVID pandemic.

We're recognised as being a respected leader in delivering IPS programs, sharing our experience and expertise at conferences, forums, and sessions across the sector. We became a founding member of the IPS Asia Pacific Learning Community, which aims to bring together IPS providers and practitioners from the Asia Pacific region to share, collaborate, and learn from each other to enhance the evidence-based model and advance mental health support and vocational outcomes.

During the year, headspace Albany was selected as one of eight sites to take part in the Thinking Skills for Work (TSW) developed by Dr Susan McGurk from Boston University. The trial, due to end in June 2025, aims to explore how the effectiveness of the IPS Model can be enhanced by trialling whether interventions aimed at optimising cognitive functioning specific to work and study goals will enhance vocational outcomes.



in focus

KAYLAH KICKS CAREER GOALS WITH HEADSPACE ALBANY

Property Management Assistant Kaylah isn't one to complain about the 'daily grind'. Instead, she looks forward with anticipation and excitement to each new day of work at Merrifield Real Estate.

Kaylah's journey from job seeker to established, long-term employee was made much smoother thanks to Vocational Specialist Connie from headspace Albany.

She engaged with the IPS program, and with Connie's assistance, Kaylah interviewed for a receptionist role, which she was then offered.

Over the next couple of years, Connie and Kaylah stayed in touch.

"We caught up often, either for coffee or for lunch, whether I had anything I needed help with or not. We would chat about how I could improve at work or what strategies I could implement in my workplace." Kaylah has now progressed to a property management assistant role, which she relishes.

"headspace Albany were so helpful and were determined to help me find my dream job in a supportive workplace. They also continued their support, even after they found me my dream job, so they could help with any queries or questions while navigating the new job and workplace."

headspace Albany's passion and proactivity in assisting young individuals in preparing for and finding employment is nothing short of inspiring. Their comprehensive approach, which encompasses work experience, labour hire, and providing support in the application process to the City, is making a significant impact on the lives of our youth.

What sets headspace Albany apart is their dedication to collaboration. They work hand in hand with the City, ensuring that young people have access to the resources and opportunities they need to enter the workforce successfully.

This collaborative spirit not only maximises the support available to our youth but also creates a seamless transition into the job market.

CEO, CITY OF ALBANY

OUR SERVICES

MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1,846 people participated in our Mental Notes program

Over the past year, we've worked with schools to tailor mental health education programs to what is needed within their communities, including sessions on transitioning to high school and responding to bullying.



in focus

MENTAL NOTES BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

With stigma around mental health being one of the main reasons young people don't access services, mental health education programs like our Mental Notes workshops play an important role in breaking down these barriers.

Delivered in schools and communities across Western Australia, Mental Notes aims to build awareness about youth mental health, and equip attendees with the tools and knowledge to support themselves and the young people in their lives. The program is delivered to young people, their parents and carers, and educators, with each group hearing the same content so that everyone supporting a young person is on the same page, and has access to the same information and resources.

Over the past year, we've revised the content for Mental Notes to make it more relevant and applicable to the latest research, trends and issues we are seeing amongst young people in a school setting.

Each school community has different needs. While the content of Mental Notes is consistent across all workshops, we partner with schools (particularly Student Services staff), to understand any specific needs so that the program can create a bigger impact on young people in their environment, recognising that each school has different levels of mental health literacy and access to resources.

Youth Focus Perth Metro Community Engagement Officer, Brodie, sees how Mental Notes is helping to break down barriers.

"We know that the first person a young person will usually go to for help with their mental health is a friend. Through Mental Notes, we are helping young people to better understand their mental health, where to go for support, and how to look after themselves and their friends.

"I always have young people coming up to me after the sessions with questions, or comments on what they have learned. Seeing the incredible difference Mental Notes makes in schools is what drives me to do what I do," said Brodie.



in focus

HEADSPACE GERALDTON CONNECTS WITH YEAR 6S AT WELLBEING FORUM

The Geraldton team engaged with more than 430 students from the Mid West for a Wellbeing Forum, creating a safe space for them to listen, learn and discuss alcohol and other drugs, and mental health.

Over three days, Year 6 students from 13 different schools around the region attended the event, organised by the local Drug Action Group and supported by headspace Geraldton.

May, Manager of headspace Geraldton said, "It was a fun and enjoyable event for all students, who walked away with information and knowledge to help them make healthy and informed choices."



in focus

MEEKA WALK FOR SUICIDE AWARENESS

The second annual event coordinated by Youth Focus and the Shire of Meekatharra saw 130 people come together to walk 3,144 steps around Meekatharra to remember each person who died by suicide in Australia in 2021.

"There aren't many families in Meekatharra who haven't been touched by suicide. We wanted to let people know there is always someone they can talk to," said Paulette, Service Manager of Youth Focus in Meekatharra.

"It was a reminder that even though you might be feeling alone, you're not. Just look around - we're here, we're together; it's a beautiful thing."



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Alongside schools, we also work closely with the communities in which we are located.

We are very much led by the needs of specific communities, partnering with other community organisations, local councils, sporting clubs and other service providers to work together to improve outcomes for young people.

Our community engagement activities allow us to build connections with young people and their families and carers, and have conversations around what's important to them.

They are designed to break down stigmas associated with mental health, provide education to improve mental health literacy, and promote mental health and wellbeing services and support.

We do this in a variety of ways, including safe space social drop-ins, campaigns, education sessions, and participating in community events like NAIDOC Week and Pride activities.

We have dedicated community or youth engagement officers employed at all of our locations, who are pivotal in engaging with and supporting young people in their local community.

RESPONSIVE SUPPORT

One of the critical roles we have within communities is to provide support when there has been a significant event that may impact a young person's mental health, such as a suspected suicide, accident, crisis, or natural disaster. We are able to do this because of the trusted and respected role we have in the communities in which we are located.

A dedicated Youth Counsellor is available to provide direct support to students, and we work in conjunction with other service providers to provide an effective coordinated response. Our postvention service in schools is an extension of Youth Focus counselling, and aims to assist high-school-aged young people, and those who teach and care for them.





our locations

MEETING YOUNG PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE



Our support and services span across our broad State.



Youth Focus provides services from eight metropolitan and regional offices across Western Australia in Burswood, Bunbury, Peel, Albany and Meekatharra, and as the lead agency for headspace centres in Albany, Geraldton, Midland and Northam.

It's so important for young people to be able to access services within their own communities. Young people face different concerns, challenges, and barriers depending on where they live.

Access to services in rural, regional and remote communities is pivotal as the prevalence rates for poor mental health and psychological distress among young people are frequently higher than their metropolitan counterparts.



OUR SERVICE FOOTPRINT

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY REGION

CHRISTMAS
& COCOS
ISLANDS

● YOUTH FOCUS OFFICE
● HEADSPACE OFFICE

MID WEST

MEEKATHARRA

GERALDTON

WHEATBELT

PERTH METRO

PERTH

NORTHAM
MIDLAND

PEEL

MANDURAH

SOUTH WEST

BUNBURY

GREAT SOUTHERN

ALBANY

WE SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THESE REGIONS, PROVIDING SERVICES AT OUR LOCATIONS, IN SCHOOLS, AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

YOUTH FOCUS GREAT SOUTHERN AND HEADSPACE ALBANY

headspace Albany and Youth Focus Great Southern supported 660 young people, with 4,159 occasions of service. This includes 58 young people who also received support for work and training through the headspace Albany Individual Placement and Support Program.



THE BIG YARN

We were selected as one of five headspace centres nationally to take part in the First Nations Community Connection Project. This is an ongoing process for headspace Albany, with the team connecting with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to listen to how we can be more useful to young Aboriginal people and their families. Phase one of the Project involved us holding an event – The Big Yarn – to meet with Menang Noongar Elders, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and parents, to listen to how we can be more useful to them in supporting their young people.

The headspace Albany team reflected after The Big Yarn, saying “It was clear we were doing the listening. We felt privileged to be trusted to have this information passed on to us and that we would do something with it.”

Next, we move on to establishing a group of Elders, community members and leaders to meet regularly and share advice on the way forward together, to ensure our centre can be more useful to First Nations young people in our area.

[Access Clinician] is such a slay. She was the first, and probably one of the only people who didn't make me feel nauseous at the idea of talking about mental-health related things. She's so kind, and never fails to say the right things or challenge unhelpful mindsets without making me uncomfortable.

YOUNG PERSON



FAMILY INCLUSION – IT STARTS AT THE FRONT DOOR

We know that family inclusion is central to providing quality care for young people and it starts at the front door.

headspace Albany's Senior Administrator Jasmine put the spotlight on the key role that frontline workers, reception and admin staff play in creating and maintaining a family inclusive culture, sharing their experience at the headspace National Forum 2024. Jasmine helped facilitate the interactive activity-based workshop, 'Family inclusion: It starts at the front door' alongside other headspace professionals.

"I presented our admin team's approach to welcoming, including and valuing families as part of their young person's mental health journey.

From being a friendly face and voice at reception, to orientating families to our centre and explaining the services we offer, to removing clinical jargon in our conversations with them, to inviting them to stay and offering them a cup of tea and a comfortable place to sit - our admin team demonstrates to families that we care, and that they matter," said Jasmine.

DELVING INTO NEURODIVERGENCE

headspace Albany's Ella, Dimitie and Christie worked with young neurodivergent people to codesign and pilot a new group for neurodivergent young people with mental health challenges.

The team met with neurodivergent young people with low mood or anxiety, and delved into what their unique needs are.

Supported by research and a literature review, the team, in consultation with young people, established a pilot group that brings together neurodivergent young people with the aim of building self-efficacy and recognising potential barriers to getting support.

The pilot was a success, with the program being implemented on an ongoing basis each term at headspace Albany.

Ella said, "The group creates a safe and neuroaffirmative environment that enables connections and encourages unmasking. It explores how participants can make the most of relationships, activities and environments to optimise their mental health! As a facilitator it has been so joyous to learn from neurodivergent young people about their experiences and to observe young people develop strong connections with each other."

THE BEST PROGRAM

The BEST program sees parents and carers attend a small multi-family group program that runs for six consecutive weeks. The program is about trying to help families understand more about adolescence, mental health, and learning to work together and to better help support young people.

"It was really helpful hearing other people's stories and perspective on parenting. Thank you for providing a safe space to talk about personal situations and problem solve with others."

CARER





YOUTH FOCUS METRO

Our Youth Focus Perth Metro services supported 663 young people, with 3,388 occasions of service. This includes 51 young people who accessed the Youth Focus Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program, Work Focus.

Youth Focus Perth Metro takes pride in fostering a shared care culture by prioritising multidisciplinary mental health support.

Our counselling, IPS, and mentoring services all work closely together as one team, striving for the best possible outcome for each unique young person and their needs.



Groups provide young people the opportunity to receive support with others so that they don't have to feel like they are doing it alone! Groups are also a great chance to get exposure to counselling to know if it's something they are wanting for themselves.

**VERONICA,
YOUTH COUNSELLOR**

WISE MINDS

The Youth Metro Team now offer the Wise Minds program, which was originally implemented by our Great Southern team in Albany where it continues to run successfully.

Wise Minds is a six-week group program that aims to empower young people in understanding, expressing, and coping with their emotions in a healthy way. The program encourages participants to develop emotional regulation skills based on dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) principles - mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness.

Wise Minds provides practical and simple skills to help young people identify and respond to emotions whilst recognising that no emotions are "good" or "bad".

During 2023-24, we changed our approach to delivering Wise Minds. We prioritised partnering with other services who already had relationships with groups of young people, and worked at building awareness and referral pathways with these organisations. We individually collaborated with Leederville HQ, headspace Midland, and Carers WA to deliver Wise Minds during the year.

i AM ME

Counselling can have a profound impact on a young person. This reflection was handwritten by a young person for her counsellor, and shows how, with the right support, a young person's mental health doesn't have to get in the way of them being who they want to be.

Sitting in that room, on that couch, I am me. The most me that I can be. The tender, vulnerable words that spill out of my mouth is my truth, what makes me, me.

When I sit on that couch, I can see my future filled with laughter and purpose ahead of me. I can clearly see my happy friends, the big bright stage awaiting me and all of the incredible people I am yet to inspire with my purpose, my art.

Sitting on this couch feels like a warm hug, from someone who knows me, who knows that I am capable and strong.

While sitting on this couch, with all these colourful pillows I feel alive, and free. I know that I am kind and I know that I'm valuable, and I remind myself that even when I leave this room, off this couch, I am still me, and I am still all those things.

Sitting on my couch, I can feel a comforting presence beside me, it's little me telling me she cares and that she's proud. I feel her within me, like she's coming out of her shell that she's been hiding behind all this time until now where she's completely safe to come out the best version of her.

MENTORING

In addition to counselling support, young people can also participate in our mentoring program. Mentoring supports young people to develop valuable life skills, set goals, and work on a roadmap for their own success out of the counselling room, and in the community.

We match young people with a Youth Focus trained volunteer mentor, who can provide insights from their own experience, share practical advice, role model, and help the young person navigate challenges.

The mentoring program goes for six months, with an option for the young person to continue for an additional six months in the same structure, make adjustments to the frequency of mentoring sessions to continue to build their own capacity and resilience and work towards their mentoring goals, or if they feel they have achieved their mentoring goals and would like to take the next step on the functional recovery journey, close their mentoring relationship.



The main take away from this mentoring experience is the profound impact that consistent support and positive reinforcement can have on a young person's life. Witnessing (the young person's) growth and transformation has been incredibly inspiring and taught me valuable lessons about patience, empathy, and the lasting value of guidance and encouragement.

QUOTE FROM MENTOR

My mentor was able to help me understand my values and what I care about, and encourage me to take leaps of faith more often.

YOUNG PERSON

YOUTH FOCUS PEEL AND SOUTH WEST

Our Peel and South West locations supported 703 young people, with 3,426 occasions of service.

The Peel and South West team service a large population of young people across a vast area, working with youth in major regional hubs like Bunbury, Busselton and Mandurah, all the way to small Wheatbelt towns and communities.

Through innovative and de-centralised solutions, and covering a lot of kilometres, the team work to increase accessibility to mental health support services for young people who otherwise face barriers to getting help when they need it.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN NARROGIN

The team have been building their presence through community engagement activities too. Community Engagement Officers Michelle and Daniel attended the Koorlongka (Youth) Health and Wellbeing Expo at Narrogin Senior High School.

While Youth Focus already provides a tele-counselling service for young people in Narrogin, the expo was a great opportunity for face-to-face engagement, with the team setting up a mental health photo booth for students to interact with.

Daniel said, "It was great to see such a large enthusiastic bunch of students engaging with the various stalls, including our photobooth where they shared some powerful messages about mental health, positive affirmations, and acknowledging their friends."



PARTNERING WITH HARVEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Like many others in regional and remote WA, the young people of Harvey face barriers in accessing quality, face-to-face, mental health support locally.

With one of the lowest Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage in the South West, the support Youth Focus provides to students at Harvey Senior High School is vital in helping them to overcome life's challenges.

"Counselling gives young people in tough situations a chance to find kindness and acceptance. In Harvey, resources are limited, and life can be challenging, access to mental health support enables young people to buck the norms and seek help.

It's not just about solving problems now but also about helping these young people build the resilience and the skills they need to handle future challenges and succeed in life," said Shrusti, Youth Counsellor.

Harvey Senior High School said, "Our ongoing partnership with Youth Focus has been invaluable in the support of our students. [This includes] the onsite advocacy and counselling offered by Youth Focus staff, the awareness raising of the M8D8 campaign, and the Hawaiian Ride for Youth visit."



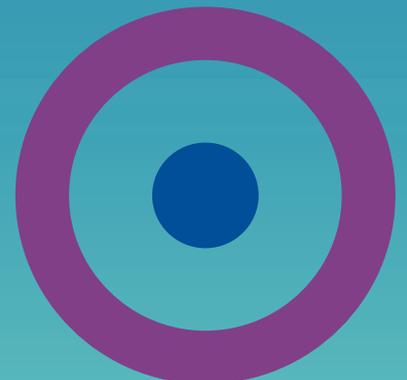
BRIDGING THE GAP

Youth Counsellor Daniel delivers tele-health to young people in grain-growing communities, who otherwise would face significant barriers to accessing mental health support.

This important program is proudly supported by the CBH Group.

"Tele-counselling sessions have expanded the way that we support young people, particularly those in rural communities, bridging the gap between geographical isolation and accessible mental health care.

By meeting them in their own space, we empower them to take control of their well-being, foster a sense of safety, and cultivate resilience in the face of adversity," said Daniel.



HEADSPACE GERALDTON

headspace Geraldton supported 411 young people, with 2,484 occasions of service. This includes 41 young people who accessed the headspace Geraldton Individual Placement and Support Program.

headspace Geraldton works within the Mid West community to support young people living in the coastal city, which has a higher-than-average percentage of young people compared to other regions in the State.

During the year, we've transitioned to the Single Session Thinking model, which is a more solution-focused and timely way for young people to access support. This has significantly reduced the waiting time to see a youth counsellor.

As demand for services increases, so does our presence. headspace Geraldton continues to grow its reach across the Mid West, reaching more young people through schools, clinics and community events. This includes offering new services in Mitchell Street, Spalding and planning for the expansion of our Geraldton centre.

MITCHELL STREET OPENING

In April 2024, we began offering counselling services from the Mitchell St Community Centre to ensure the young people in Spalding have easier access to our services – walking distance in fact!

In partnership with the Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC), the new service provides accessible, youth friendly and culturally safe spaces to engage with young people and their families. This has removed one of the barriers of needing to travel to headspace Geraldton to access our services, which is located some distance away with limited public transport opportunities.

On Mondays, we run the "Yarn Safe" group at Mitchell Street. These groups are for young Aboriginal women with the focus on creating a safe space for them to learn about and explore ways they can care for their physical and mental health and safety.



It's been fantastic to be a part of Mitchell Street. The centre has two counselling rooms, a large activity room and kitchen, as well as access to a newly re-developed park/playground with a full basketball court and lots of outdoor sitting spaces, including a yarning circle with a fire pit.

headspace Geraldton has helped my daughter and our family in so many ways. And have been an amazing support during hard times.

MOTHER OF YOUNG PERSON

headspace Geraldton is amazing, I love the involvement of the LGBTQIA+ community and the involvement with the young people of this generation.

headspace does a lot to support and help the young people in need to strive to their best self.

YOUNG PERSON, AGED 13

EXPANDING OUR REACH IN THE MID WEST

With the large number of young people living in the Mid West, increasing demand for youth mental health services in the region, and recent studies looking at the needs and challenges of the delivery services in Geraldton and the Mid West, in 2023 we began planning for a Youth Hub in Geraldton.

Thanks to \$1.4million in funding from Lotterywest, we'll be leasing and refurbishing the upstairs area of 193 Marine Terrace Geraldton, where headspace Geraldton is currently based, to create a Youth Hub for the young people of Geraldton, their community and the broader Mid West region.

The additional floor will create a safe, supportive and youth friendly 'one stop shop' for Youth Focus and other like-minded service providers, community groups and those organisations who have a focus on the mental health and wellbeing of young people to deliver their programs.

Through the programs we currently provide in Geraldton, we support more than seven percent of the population, including within the seven high schools in the region. The Youth Hub project will allow us to greatly increase the number of young people we can support, and expand some of our programs like 'Yarn Safe'.

We've worked closely with a large number of stakeholders to inform and shape the development of the Youth Hub, including the headspace Geraldton Consortium partners, the Mental Health Commission, headspace National, local State and Federal Members, peak bodies, community members, and mental health researchers and experts, as well as young people and their families.

The new Youth Hub is expected to be operational in 2025.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

In the past year, we've run three mental health first aid courses for parents, community members and people who work with young people, training around 25 people. This service is provided to the community free of charge.

We also introduced a support group for parents and carers of trans and gender diverse young people.

This group meets regularly, and from this, a number of young people have become involved with headspace Geraldton who otherwise wouldn't have been connected to our service.

Extending our support across the region, we've also partnered with the Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC) and WA Centre for Rural Health to develop a series of emotional and social wellbeing workshops which will be delivered in Mullewa in Term 4, 2024.



As a queer kid myself, I am so excited to give young people a chance to have a welcoming space and just have some fun.

ZIGGY, LOCAL YOUNG PERSON AND SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATOR AT HEADSPACE GERALDTON

PRIDE TIDE

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant provided from the Department of Communities' WA Youth Engagement Grant Program, Geraldton is getting its first youth music, arts and culture festival in November 2024.

Pride Tide will celebrate Geraldton's LBGTQIA+ young people with a night of live music, a silent disco, dancing under the stars, and much more.

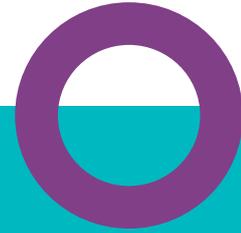
The idea came about last year, when the first local LBGTQIA+ social support group, known as "The Space", evolved into a group of 25 young people who, over weekly catch ups, identified a need for an event that demonstrated allyship and social connectedness.

The event is being organised by a committee of young volunteers, who will not only help shape the event, but they will also have access to workshops run by local creatives, event planners and decision makers, as well as health-based workshops on relationships, sexual, physical and mental health, and healthy relationships.

Youth Access Clinician Sarah says, "This is such an amazing opportunity for our centre to support local young people to truly embrace who they are, celebrate their uniqueness and put on a fun, inclusive event for the young people of Geraldton!"



YOUTH FOCUS MEEKATHARRA



Meekatharra supported 167 people, with 489 occasions of service.



Youth Focus Meekatharra is very much about working in community.

Given our location and community needs, the centre is focused on developing and delivering mental health programs and interventions that are culturally sensitive and relevant to the Meekatharra community. The team collaborate with Aboriginal Elders, young people, and community members to ensure that services are respectful and effective, and that we are seen as a safe place.

The underlying model informing and underpinning Youth Focus Meekatharra's service offering is the Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing model (SEWB), which takes a holistic view of health and a collectivist view of self, where self is embedded within family and community.

The SEWB model recognises connections to land, sea, culture, and spirituality, as well as social, historical, and political influences that can affect wellbeing.

Much of our work focuses around our Young Women's Group, Young Men's Group, Art Group, and a general group where community members of all ages come to our centre to come together, yarn, and have something to eat.

These groups allow us to build connection and trust with the community, and provide an opportunity for young people and their families to learn new skills like drone flying, making wall hangings and jewellery, and playing in a jam session.

PUTTING ON A SHOW

In early 2024, Youth Focus joined with other community members and organisations to start planning Meeka's first fashion show.

Led by Meekatharra's Communities of Focus, the Barndi Mayu Yalimanmanha Fashion Show will not only be a celebration of style and creativity but also a platform to promote positive relationships, strengthen connections, nurture leadership skills, and cultivate collaboration and cooperation among community members.

It will emphasise a strong connection to country, acknowledging and celebrating the cultural and geographical ties that bind our community together.

Youth Focus Meekatharra Service Manager Paulette said the event is about much more than dressing up.

"The fashion show is an awesome way of bringing together our community, and giving young people the chance to strengthen and develop relationships, learn more about health and wellbeing, work as a team, and nurture their leadership skills," said Paulette.

The young people have been busy creating decorations for the event, learning how to walk like a model, and workshopping their outfits for the fashion show, which will be held in town in October 2024.





ON THE BUS

Getting around can be a challenge in Meekatharra, given its isolation and location more than 760kms from Perth, and 540kms from Geraldton. Thanks to the generous support of the Outred family, Youth Focus Meekatharra purchased a mine spec ready 12-seater bus to help us better support the local community. Since it arrived in town in June 2024, the bus has been used to take young people for on-country trips, transport young people and their families to and from activities and events, collect donations and goods for the Elders, and take visitors to Meekatharra to see Peace Gorge.

“The bus has been a wonderful time saver and people mover!

Instead of doing multiple trips in the tiny Yaris, and having to split staff members, we have been able to take the kids home after group in one trip. Having reliable and safe transport means we can take the kids to events they might normally miss, take a family home with shopping, and save some little legs a long hike when it's hot.

We have some big events planned in the future and we are looking forward to taking the kids to them in the bus,” said Youth Focus Meekatharra Service Manager Paulette.

Plans are underway for the bus to be decorated with artwork created by the young people in Meekatharra.

SHOWING UP

Over the past twelve months, we've been providing increasing support and advocacy for young people in Meekatharra involved with the justice system. From being in court with a young person and their family, to providing support after a young person has been released from detention, our involvement shows the court that the young person has the services and support around them to help.

Seeing first-hand the impact detention has on a young person's mental health, we've continued to work with organisations like Social Reinvestment WA to advocate for systemic policy change through campaigns like Raise the Age and the closure of unit 18.

We've also provided practical support and advocacy to the community, providing assistance when issues are impacting their wellbeing.

I arrived in Meekatharra with the Winter rains that flooded the creek, I flew over deep orange and red dirt rich with gold and other hidden treasures such as wildflowers and bush tucker. The community has been incredibly friendly and kind, with colleagues who are patient as I navigate this new chapter, learning on country and building relationships while appreciating the strengths here. As I settle in, I'm growing more comfortable with the small planes, one of which is nicknamed, “the Torpedo” and bouncy flights. My hope is, in my time in Meekatharra, I can develop some understanding of the local Wadjjarri language. Barndi Mayu (good kids)!

ASTRID, MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIAN, MEEKATHARRA



HEADSPACE MIDLAND

headspace Midland supported 1,008 young people, with 7,979 occasions of service; and provided 3,783 occasions of service to 95 young people through the headspace Early Psychosis program; and supported 59 young people with their work and study goals through IPS.

headspace Midland is a youth-friendly centre, with the team maintaining a strong local presence in the community and in schools, engaging in education around prevention and support pathways, and collaborating with other government and non-government service providers.

We are also an important part of the community, not only attending local events but also delivering initiatives that benefit young people.

“I have the privilege to oversee the incredible work our clinicians, case managers and key specialist staff provide to so many young people across the City of Swan and beyond. The work and passion to support young people experiencing mental ill-health goes beyond just the clinical capacity but is the drive and vision of headspace Midland to offer the highest level of clinical and experiential service to every young person, caregiver and stakeholder we engage with through any of the services and programs we offer. The outcomes we are able to achieve continue to grow and increase the community interest in engaging with our service,” said Matt, Centre Manager headspace Midland.

In partnership with Black Swan, headspace Midland continues to offer the headspace Early Psychosis (hEP), a comprehensive, early intervention mental health service for young people experiencing a First Episode of Psychosis (FEP), or who are at Ultra High Risk (UHR) of psychosis.



Our Place Youth Committee has provided me with an opportunity to connect with community and other LGBTQIA+ young people in a personally meaningful way that has elevated my pride in my own identity and my sense of connection.

Through meetings and peer mentoring, I have improved on my communication, teamwork and confidence expressing my ideas in group settings.

ROBBIE SHE/HER

SHOPPING FOR A GENDER-AFFIRMING WARDROBE

Our Place is a Safe Space collaboration between the City of Swan, Youth Focus and headspace Midland, offering a social drop-in program for LGBTQIA+ young people aged between 12-25.

This year, the Our Place Youth Committee started a Gender Affirming Wardrobe project to create a safe space where attendees of Our Place and LGBTQIA+ young people express themselves by trying on clothes, and experimenting with styles, colours and textures. Members of Our Place went shopping at Good Sammy's to select a range of clothing in different categories such as non-binary, feminine, masculine, and unisex, with a wide range of sizes to ensure they are accessible for everyone regardless of age, gender identity or expression.





HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Motivated by the impact homelessness, financial stress, and food insecurity has on a young person's mental health, headspace Midland's Youth Reference Group member Ted led the establishment of headspace Midland's first community pantry in July 2023.

Ted worked to research current concerns and gather information, develop and propose the project, design the graphics and collaborate with Community Engagement Officer Casey to further support young people experiencing homelessness and concerns associated with the cost of living.

headspace Midland staff who identify a young person in need can access the pantry for basic items including soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste, period products, noodles, cereal, milk, muesli bars, pasta, rice, canned goods. There are also clothes available. Donations are sourced from staff, local organisations and community members.

The community pantry received an upgrade at the beginning of 2024, with Bunnings Midland providing a dedicated shelving unit which can be found in the main reception area of headspace Midland.

BOP N SHOP MARKET

As part of Youth Week 2024, the headspace Midland Youth Reference Group (YRG) co-designed, developed and facilitated the inaugural Bop N Shop Market, held on 6 April at the Crooked Spire Coffee House in Midland.

The event was a huge success, and featured local young artists, performers, small businesses and services, as well as games, activities and giveaways for all ages.

The Bop N Shop Market was an excellent opportunity for the YRG members to gain experience in everything from event planning, grant writing, liaising with contractors and vendors, graphic design and marketing strategies, to event management, photography, videography and so much more, and have lots of fun in the process.



HEADSPACE NORTHAM

headspace Northam supported 103 young people, with 365 occasions of service.

headspace Northam have continued to make great strides, with the team and its reach growing over the last financial year, enabling them to support more young people in more areas, and connect widely with community.

The team has expanded, with the inclusion of two new roles - a Clinical Lead and a permanent Community Engagement Officer.

We support young people and communities beyond Northam, visiting other Wheatbelt towns such as Cunderdin and York and attending health and wellbeing days at local Wheatbelt high schools. These visits allow us to connect with young people and share how they can access support if they need it.



DROP-IN SESSIONS AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

This year has seen the introduction of monthly drop-in sessions at Northam Residential College and Cunderdin Agricultural College, allowing us to reach students from across the Wheatbelt. The sessions include hosting workshops and activities around mental health education, while strengthening connections with local youth.

“With students attending these colleges coming from all across the Wheatbelt, we find it so valuable to be able to meet and talk with students from regional and rural areas with limited mental health support services available.

These students also have the additional pressures of living away from home and family during what can be difficult times, hence why these students are a high priority to our Northam team,” said Nina, Community Engagement Officer.

GIVING A VOICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORTHAM

For the first time, headspace Northam has a Youth Reference Group, giving young people in the region an opportunity to contribute and inform our work.

Established in February 2024, the Northam Youth Reference Group meets monthly and has four current members who are flourishing in their new role, giving feedback, sharing insights, and influencing the way mental health support is provided in their local area.

“I think it is important because it means people’s opinions are heard, we can share experiences and learn from each, people can make suggestions to improve community outcomes to make Northam more interactive and inclusive,” said Stacey, one of headspace Northam’s new Youth Reference Group members.





UNITY WALK

headspace Northam is building its connections in the community, working to ensure services are tailored to the unique needs of young people and their families in the area.

Aboriginal Youth Support Officer Zoe and Community Engagement Officer Nina joined students from the local primary and high schools of Northam to celebrate First Nations culture with a Unity Walk held along the Avon River.

The event was run in the lead up to NAIDOC Week, and was greatly enjoyed by all involved.

It was another opportunity to connect with students, some of whom Zoe works with at Northam Senior High School, and others Nina had engaged in her workshops with Clontarf.



our partners

CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION



Our impact is greater when we collaborate with others.

We are motivated towards a common goal knowing that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they work together.

We value the relationships and partnerships that enable us to collectively make a difference in the lives of young people across WA.

YOUNG PEOPLE

We work alongside young people, and their families and carers, to ensure their voices remain at the heart of everything we do.

Young people are engaged at every level of our organisation to inform the delivery of safe, high-quality services and ensure we remain connected to what young people need. Our model of care empowers young people to make decisions about the type, frequency, and modality of services to best meet their needs.

One of the primary ways we are informed by young people is through our Youth Reference Groups (YRG). We have Youth Reference Groups in Albany, Geraldton, Perth, Midland, and in Northam, which was established in February 2024.

Each of the Youth Reference Groups responds to and reflects on the issues and projects that are important to them, and the young people in their communities. Young people on our Youth Reference Group have the opportunity to be involved in a number of ways, including:

- Community engagement opportunities
- Helping to shape and inform our services
- Advocacy of youth mental health
- Community events and projects
- Collaborating with other local community organisations
- Support the development of policy, procedure and initiatives

During 2023-24, members of our Youth Reference Groups:

- Organised community events such as the Bop N Shop Market, Queer Met Gala, and the second headspace Midland Youth Panel Discussion
- Supported community outreach and engagement including participating in Pride Fair
- Shaped and informed strategic projects and policies

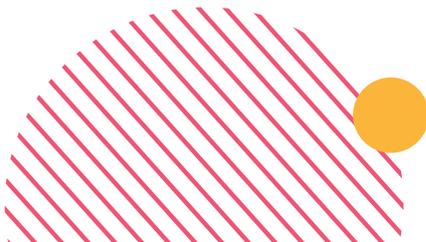


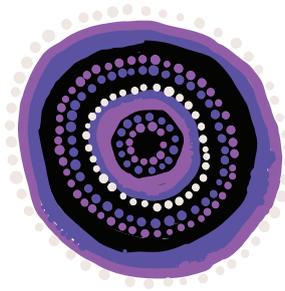
Being on the YRG has helped me find my voice. When I started on the YRG, I was on my gap year from high school, and didn't know what I wanted to do. Now I know that working in the community sector is the path forward for me.

LILY, FORMER BURSWOOD YOUTH REFERENCE GROUP MEMBER

Our Albany, Geraldton and Midland centres also have youth-led groups specifically for LGBTQIA+ young people.

Over the past year, we farewelled a number of long-term Youth Reference Group members, and welcomed new members. A special thank you to all the young people, past and present, who volunteer their time with such enthusiasm and commitment.





ABORIGINAL ELDERS, YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

We continue to prioritise relationships, working to build trust and increase access to our services and ongoing mental health support for young Aboriginal people, their families and carers, and their communities.

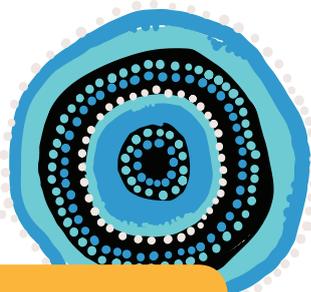
In 2023-24, we made important changes to our Reconciliation Working Group to ensure space for Aboriginal staff to lead our journey and be involved in an open and honest way, and to better reflect that our commitment to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people goes beyond the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Aboriginal Governance Group was established in September 2023 to improve Aboriginal representation across the State. The Elders provide guidance and wisdom on our work, helping us to create a culturally safe roadmap. Their work has included developing plans to engage with young Aboriginal people on what we do, and how we do it.

We've continued to develop our Innovate Reconciliation Plan, including a foreword from the Elders in Aboriginal Governance Group about the steps they expect us as an organisation to take in order to continue to develop cultural safety for Aboriginal young people and staff. The Plan is now in review with Reconciliation Australia.

Our Senior and Executive Leadership Team took part in 'Best Boss' Kwobadjil Birdiya training, focused on increasing our leaders' awareness of the factors impacting cultural safety and developing our shared learning.

headspace Albany's participation in the First Nations Community Connections Program is another example of our commitment to providing a service that is culturally safe and appropriate. Our work in Geraldton through the Mitchell Street project, and with Elders in Meekatharra and Northam are other examples. These projects are detailed further under Our Location pages in this report.



in focus

"YOU'RE WALKING WITH US NOW. YOU CAN'T WALK AWAY."

AUNTY CHERYL PHILLIPS

Written for our Innovate Reconciliation Plan, this is the Elders' Statement:

Young people are the future and can achieve anything they want to. They can be happy, strong and build the lives they want for themselves, their families, and their communities.

To support them, we need truth-telling, listening, and relationships. By doing these things consistently you can build trust, which creates a better future for all young people. This will take commitment, courage, and being guided by our unique journeys, life experiences, knowledge, and stories.



Actions speak louder than words. We have to work together, to empower young people to make decisions and choices to build their strength and future. Youth Focus must advocate for change, and challenge the systems that hold young people back, to create communities where all young people can reach their goals and dreams.

We see that Youth Focus wants to make that change, but there is a lot of work still to do to make sure the roots are so strong that they become part of everything Youth Focus does.

We are committed, ready, and want to continue walking with you. Going backwards is not an option.





OUR PARTNERS



CARERS & FAMILIES

Carers and family members play an important role in supporting young people with their mental health, and we recognise and value their involvement in our services.

In August 2023, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Carers WA to ensure we have carers' input into strategic priorities and decisions which impact the design of our services. As part of this partnership, two carer representatives sit on our Quality, Safety, and Clinical Governance Board Committee. We also refer visitors to links to Carers WA resources on the Youth Focus website.

In June 2024, we presented our mental health education program, Mental Notes, online for the first time as a way to reach more parents and carers.

SECTOR & SERVICE PARTNERS

Youth Focus fosters partnerships that add value to our own service, and the sector's capacity. By collaborating with others in the sector, we can influence systems and policy.

During the financial year, we continued our strong partnerships with the sector's peak bodies and agencies including WA Primary Health Alliance, Youth Affairs Council of WA, WACOSS, WA Association for Mental Health, and have contributed to a number of consultation sessions and discussion papers across the sector to ensure that youth mental health, and the services needed to support young people, are on the agenda.

We also continued our commitment to research and developing an evidence-base for youth mental health through partnerships with University of Western Australia, Curtin University, Orygen, Australian National University, Perron Institute, and The Kids Institute, amongst others.

In November 2023, we established a Memorandum of Understanding with Foodbank to give young people, their families, or their carers, who are in Perth and experiencing financial hardship access to a six-month Foodbank WA card.

At a local level, each of our centres works closely with like-minded service providers in their regions.



WORKING WITH SECTOR PARTNERS ON A SUBMISSION FOR THE YOUTH ACTION PLAN

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Through the delivery of our services, as well as our advocacy and advisory work, we work closely with governments at all levels, as well as government agencies and departments.

In the past year, our people have also participated on, provided advice, and contributed to a number of government-led steering committees, advisory groups and consultation sessions to ensure that the issues impacting young people's mental health, and the support and services they need, are taken into consideration in the development and implementation of policies and programs. This has included:

- Supporting Communities Forum Child Safe Organisations Working Group (DoC)
- Working Group to transition to the new Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community-Managed Organisations (MHC)
- Service Provider Panel Membership – Special interest panel (WAPHA)



- Commissioner for Children and Young People Position Statements

Between February and April 2024, we partnered with Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA) to write a submission around youth mental health to inform the State Government's new Youth Action Plan. This included facilitating a session with other sector partners to identify some of the challenges and opportunities experienced by young people in WA.

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS & DONORS

We are fortunate to have the ongoing support of many individuals, and organisations large and small, who partner with us so that we can deliver our services to specific regions and/or groups of young people.



in focus

PARTNERING WITH CBH TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN REGIONAL WA

We are proud to partner with CBH group, as one of four leading mental health service organisations helping to deliver the Regional Mental Wellness Program, which aims to increase access to mental health services across CBH's grain-growing communities.

The partnership with CBH has helped enable our counsellors to deliver online mental health counselling to young people in Western Australia's grain-growing communities.

In its fourth year, this partnership has enabled 645 counselling sessions for young people in these regions, supporting them through challenges such as family and domestic violence, anxiety and depression.

Rates of suicide and self-harm are higher in regional areas. Distance, transport, stigma, costs and waitlists can be significant barriers for young people in regional communities being able to access mental health services they need, and our partnership with CBH helps ensure that young people in grain-growing communities have support, when and where they need it.

CBH has also enabled the creation of a Regional Crisis information booklet, which has seen four mental health service providers – Youth Focus, Lifeline WA, MIFWA and Black Dog Institute - team up to provide everyone in WA's grain-growing communities with essential information, such as how to access mental health support services.

Thank you to CBH for supporting youth mental health, helping young people to thrive in their communities.



in focus

M8D8 CAMPAIGN SHARES DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON SUPPORTING MATES' MENTAL HEALTH

The 2024 M8D8 campaign encouraged young men to make time to hang out, be real, and to be there for each other.

This year, we asked young men to create videos about what puts pressure on the mental health of themselves and their mates, and how they support each other. We shared these powerful videos through the M8D8 Instagram page, reaching young people all across the South West and Peel region.

Mental health awareness and support for young people is more important than ever, particularly in regional areas of Western Australia, where young people may experience barriers to accessing services, including distance and cost.

The M8D8 campaign was developed by Youth Focus with the backing of longstanding partner, Alcoa, to help support the mental health of young people in Kwinana, Peel, and the Upper South West areas of Western Australia.

Mark, Youth Focus Regional Manager for Peel and the South West, said that the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the Peel and South West regions remains a primary focus for Youth Focus.

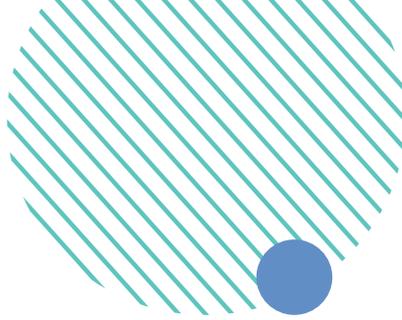
"Each year we support hundreds of young people in these regions, in our locations and in schools," he said.

"Many young men in the Peel and South West regions are struggling with loneliness and isolation, which is often compounded by remoteness from the services they need to support them."

"We rely on the people closest to us, and that's why M8D8 is such an important campaign, because it encourages friends to look out for each other and maintain their connections," said Mark.

"Building a network of mates who can support each other is crucial."



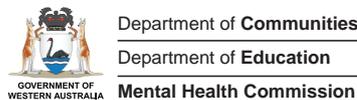


THANK YOU

A huge shout-out to the individuals, businesses, corporations and organisations who have financially supported us in 2023-24. Your generosity and support is greatly appreciated and enables us to support thousands of young people across WA with their mental health.

We couldn't do it without you!

PREMIER & MAJOR PARTNERS



OFFICIAL PARTNERS



OFFICIAL SUPPORTERS



EVENT SPONSORS

Adventure Out Australia • Ansell Strategic • Aqualyte • Arc Infrastructure • Avoca • Azure Capital • Delta Lithium
Delaware North • Blue Diamond • Birdhouse • Broadwater Resort • Budget Truck & Car Rental • Buswest • Cash Converters
Citadel Magnus • Hawaiian • Hesperia • HPH Solutions • Karora Resources • KPMG • MACA • Marvel Stadium • Matador Capital
Office National (Canning Vale) • oOh! Media • Rapid Relief • Pedal Mafia • Resource Capital Funds • Shadforth • St Johns
Sullivan Logistics • Synergy Consulting • Trench Health & Fitness • WAPHA • Wise Wines

HAWAIIAN RIDE FOR YOUTH

The Hawaiian Ride for Youth holds a special place in the hearts of so many Western Australians.

For 22 years, the Ride has brought the broader community together with a single purpose in mind – to raise funds and awareness for youth mental health, so that Youth Focus can continue to deliver its vital services to young people across WA.

After 700kms, five days riding and six months training, 140 cyclists ranging in age from 21 to 83 years completed the 2024 Hawaiian Ride for Youth. Along the way, they raised an incredible \$2.1million for Youth Focus, taking the total raised since the Ride began to nearly \$34million.

The cyclists, supported by 45 volunteer support crew, set off from Albany on 19 March 2024 and travelled from Albany to Perth via three different routes, and visited 15 schools along the way, where they met students and shared their personal stories of mental health.

At each school, the riders were supported by a local Youth Focus staff member, so that after each visit, young people would know where they can reach out for help. It's all part of breaking down the stigma around mental health, showing young people that they're not alone.

Youth Focus CEO, Derry Simpson, said the Hawaiian Ride for Youth was so much more than a cycling event.



“The Hawaiian Ride for Youth gives us a platform to talk about mental health and raises funds to help us deliver our services to support young people throughout the year. “At its heart, the Ride is about bringing the community together, raising awareness about youth mental health support, and ultimately creating a Western Australia where our young people can thrive.”

The Ride would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of the cyclists, the Hawaiian Ride for Youth Volunteer Organising Committee, the communities we ride through, and the sponsors who so generously support the event, particularly Hawaiian, our naming rights partner since the very first Ride.



hawaiian 

RIDE FOR YOUTH

 youthfocus





governance

OUR BOARD

Individual profiles of our Board of Directors are available on our website.



ROD JONES
CHAIR

Joined May 2020



DEAN HELY
PAST CHAIR

Joined March 2015
Resigned July 2023



DERRY SIMPSON
DIRECTOR & CEO

Joined December 2020



ASHLEIGH LIN
DIRECTOR

Joined February 2020



BILLY MESTON
DIRECTOR

Joined February 2020



CHRISTINA MATTHEWS
DIRECTOR

Joined August 2020



FRAMY ANNE BROWNE
DIRECTOR

Joined July 2023



PETER WYNN OWEN
DIRECTOR

Joined May 2022



PHIL RENSHAW
DIRECTOR

Joined October 2018



SAM RETALLACK
DIRECTOR

Joined November 2022



OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

Individual profiles of our Executive Team are available on our website.



DERRY SIMPSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



ANGIE PERKINS
CHIEF OPERATING
OFFICER



ERIN HALL
EXECUTIVE MANAGER
CULTURE & CAPABILITY



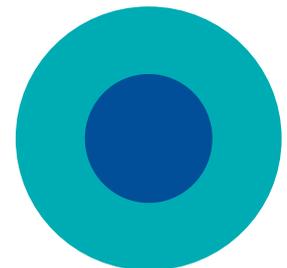
**HEIKO PLANGE-
KORNDORFER**
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER



JILL DOWNARD
CHIEF MARKETING
OFFICER



NICOLE HOUTBY
CHIEF FINANCIAL
OFFICER





financials

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Thanks to support from our invaluable donors, partners and funding bodies, we were able to provide mental health services to 3,707 young people this financial year, with 22,290 occasions of service.

Like many organisations have experienced, this financial year brought further increases to the cost of providing our services.

While some of our funding contracts adjust to inflation, this is not the case for all, and as costs and the demand for our services increase, we are grateful for our diversified funding sources to enable us to meet the growing needs of young people.

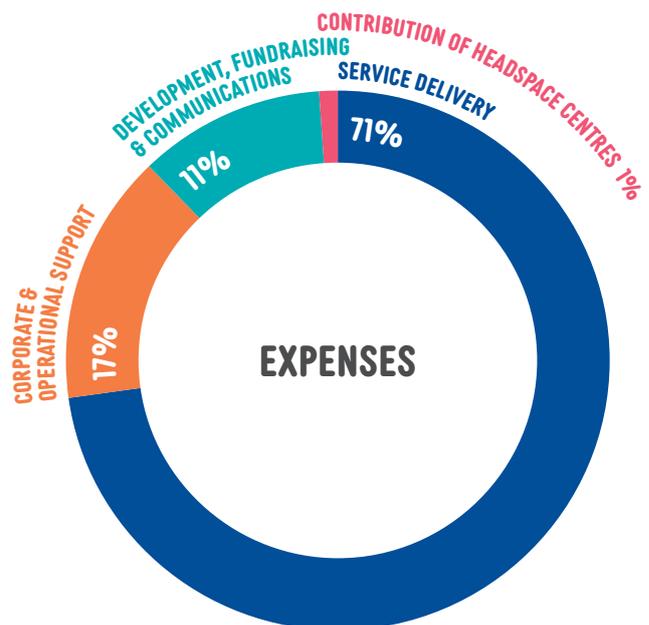
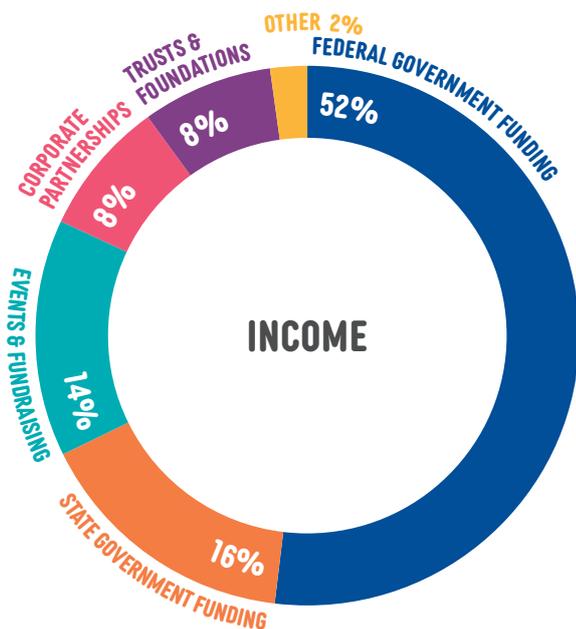
After conducting a comprehensive review and market analysis, we prioritised investment in our people by ensuring that our salaries reflect the increasing cost of living and remain comparable to the wider sector.

This year saw us make key investments to our IT infrastructure to make upgrades to our systems and equipment, and we introduced a new dedicated role that will support our continued IT best practice and future innovation.

We were able to expand our services across the Peel and South West regions thanks to additional funding from Telethon, and we have introduced outreach services in Geraldton to make our services more accessible for communities in the Mid West.

We also initiated a transformation project that will enable us to expand and improve the accessibility of our metro-based services, and by increasing our capacity for centralised support and innovation, will allow us to grow the impact of our services in locations across Western Australia.

To enable this growth, we have initiated a fundraising program of works to engage our passionate supporters within the community, which will support us to continue to develop financial sustainability into the future.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

AUDITED	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,386,211	6,025,450
Trade and other receivables	835,603	765,421
Other current assets	288,189	261,524
Total Current Assets	5,510,003	7,052,395
Non-Current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	2,143,112	2,282,688
Right of use assets	551,049	403,475
Other financial assets	2,646,704	1,151,953
Total Non-Current Assets	5,340,865	3,838,116
Total Assets	10,850,868	10,890,511
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	1,076,034	893,334
Interest bearing liabilities	323,954	192,859
Other liabilities	776,645	598,993
Provisions	804,222	681,735
Total Current Liabilities	2,980,855	2,366,921
Non-Current Liabilities		
Interest bearing liabilities	268,197	255,655
Provisions	170,452	105,772
Total Non-Current Liabilities	438,649	361,427
Total Liabilities	3,419,504	2,728,348
NET ASSETS	7,431,364	8,162,163
EQUITY		
Accumulated funds	7,431,364	8,162,163
TOTAL EQUITY	7,431,364	8,162,163

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements in the Youth Focus Limited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024, available from youthfocus.com.au

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS & OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

AUDITED	2024 \$	2023 \$
REVENUE		
Revenue	15,222,054	14,944,326
Interest income	338,923	175,096
Other income	92,295	4,557
Revenue & other income	15,653,272	15,123,979
Employee benefits expense	(11,851,586)	(10,680,459)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(711,536)	(461,425)
Event expenses	(688,513)	(729,812)
Information communications technology expenses	(697,276)	(663,751)
Motor vehicle running expenses	(96,522)	(165,088)
Rent and outgoings	(443,427)	(573,694)
Insurance expense	(109,868)	(96,621)
General office expenses	(559,769)	(629,231)
Travel expenses	(212,152)	(209,245)
Marketing expenses	(204,212)	(177,809)
Finance costs	(37,107)	(26,320)
Other expenses	(772,103)	(859,929)
Expenditure	(16,384,071)	(15,273,384)
Loss before income tax expense	(730,799)	(149,405)
Income tax expense	-	-
Loss after tax from continuing operations	(730,799)	(149,405)
Other comprehensive income	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE LOSS FOR THE YEAR	(730,799)	(149,405)

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements in the Youth Focus Limited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024, available from youthfocus.com.au



STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

AUDITED	2024 \$	2023 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from customers	15,350,524	13,758,574
Payments to suppliers and employees	(15,274,189)	(14,693,405)
Interest received	326,389	175,096
Interest paid	(37,107)	(26,320)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	365,617	(786,055)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds received for capital enhancements	-	526,633
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(198,934)	(740,669)
Payments for investments	(1,397,899)	(1,147,396)
Net cash (used in) investing activities	(1,596,833)	(1,361,432)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Transfer (to) term deposits	(8,466)	(5,617)
Payment of lease liabilities	(399,557)	(277,363)
Net cash (used in) financing activities	(408,023)	(282,980)
Net (decrease) in cash held	(1,639,239)	(2,430,467)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	6,025,450	8,455,917
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	4,386,211	6,025,450

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Notes to the Financial Statements in the Youth Focus Limited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024, available from youthfocus.com.au



youthfocus.com.au

   @youthfocuswa #youthfocuswa

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