

Deepening impact

Enabling
lasting change



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Our vision

A world where every child has the opportunity to change their future.

Our purpose

To overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

Our belief

Education is one of the most powerful change agents.

Our values

Respect – We are caring.
Integrity – We are ethical.
Collaboration – We work together.
Innovation – We are dynamic.
Excellence – We strive for quality.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Smith Family pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country in the communities in which we work throughout Australia, and recognises their connection to their lands, waters and communities.

We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and Custodians of the Land.

We acknowledge that the land on which our workplaces are located are the lands of the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country.



Partnering with children and families so they can change their futures

At The Smith Family, we believe that education is one of the most powerful change agents, and that every child should have the chance to reach their full potential. That's why we partner with children, young people and their families to help them overcome educational inequality caused by poverty, so they can change their futures.

This year, many Australian students from low socio-economic backgrounds faced continuing challenges. They include family financial disadvantage, housing insecurity and the impacts of the digital divide, which affects their motivation and engagement at school.

These issues can compound to put children at risk of poorer educational outcomes overall, and means they are less likely to complete Year 12 compared to their more advantaged peers. The reasons for this are deeply complex and have been exacerbated by the prolonged cost-of-living crisis, highlighting the ongoing necessity of our work.

Our support begins in early childhood when we work with a child's family and community to help them develop the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need to start school on the right track. During primary and secondary school, we ensure they have the everyday essentials and additional learning support needed to thrive.

To support positive transitions post-school, we offer students career support at high school and tertiary levels to help them with study pathways and job-readiness. We also support parents and caregivers to build the confidence and skills they need to actively engage with their children's learning.

This multi-layered approach equips children and young people with the practical and financial support they need to engage with their education and create better futures for themselves.

Message from the Chairman and the CEO

The Smith Family works closely with parents and carers to ensure children and young people experiencing disadvantage have the opportunity to make the most of their education. We do this by partnering with students, families, schools and community partners. Our work is enabled by the generous and ongoing help of our donors, partners and volunteers. We value their support and have a longstanding commitment to using evidence to guide our work by measuring and reporting our impact.

In 2023–24, continued cost-of-living pressures worsened the hardship experienced by many Australian families, with those we support being especially vulnerable. The flow-on effects of financial stress on families can be insidious for children's educational outcomes. Poorer mental health and wellbeing, deepening academic challenges and shifting family attitudes are among the challenges students are experiencing, and were accentuated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the efforts and hard work of teachers and school staff, Australia's education system continues to struggle to meet the needs of students, especially those experiencing disadvantage. Educational achievement gaps have persisted across the board for our nation. The 2024 NAPLAN results showed that nearly one in three students are not meeting numeracy and literacy benchmarks, and by Year 9 students experiencing disadvantage are on average four and a half years behind their peers.

Outcome focused

The key goals of our strategy are to deepen our impact and grow our reach. The reach of our programs increased this year through the recruitment of more children and families into our program. By 30 June 2024, we were supporting 67,165 *Learning for Life* program participants, up from 62,822 last year.

To deepen our impact, we are focused on enhancing the effectiveness of our programs by continuously improving outcomes for students and their families. Progress includes providing self-service tools for families, which has freed up our Family Partnerships Coordinators to spend more time supporting individual families in need.

We also continued to assess what are the most beneficial programs and approaches for young people and their families. We published our Programs Policy Rationale, identifying the types of support required for *Learning for Life* students and when they should receive it during their education journey.

Data focus and innovation

Since 2021, The Smith Family has partnered with the South Australian Department for Education on an innovative data exchange arrangement. This is giving our frontline team members real-time access to crucial educational data held by the department on *Learning for Life* students. Data includes areas such as school attendance rates, literacy, numeracy, Year 12 completion and behaviour. This year, a new exchange agreement was launched with the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People. These agreements assist our team in providing more targeted and timely support to students and families, contributing to improved educational outcomes over time.

We have also entered into similar agreements with education departments in Western Australia and Queensland, with plans for more operational dashboards nationally in the coming year.

In 2023–24, we worked on enhancing our team members' skills and practices through improving data management, upgrading technology resources, and with stronger platforms and systems. We also focused on addressing key capability gaps and enhancing productivity through digitisation and automation. Through our NextGen digital transformation program for example, we adopted service design and co-creation to streamline processes and free up team member time.

We continue to be focused on our risk management and compliance, and cyber resilience is our priority. Like many organisations, we continued to strengthen our work in being cyber secure, including establishing a new Security Operations Centre and finetuning our security tools to enhance our ability to respond to threats.

Our finances and funding

This year, we continued to experience a difficult fundraising environment due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and economic uncertainty. However, our fundraising performance has been resilient thanks to generous contributions from our supporters. In 2023–24, our supporters contributed \$144.6 million for our work, and we are very grateful for their commitment to our cause.



Our revenue surpassed both last year's result and our expectations. Economic pressures continued to impact many household budgets, reducing the pool of potential new sponsors for *Learning for Life* students. However, our dedication to supporting children's education, engaging donors in our progress, long-term investments in attracting sponsors and maintaining their satisfaction, and system upgrades improving service, all helped to mitigate the slower rate of sponsorship growth and further bolstered our sustainability.

The operating result for the year was an intended deficit of \$11 million, compared to the planned deficit of \$3.4 million in the prior year. This higher deficit reflects a strategic decision to invest some of our reserves in activities to further improve our impact and grow the reach of our work. Our reserves remain at a healthy level and are expected to be sufficient to fund the organisation's strategy while ensuring our ongoing viability.

At The Smith Family, investing in our organisation allows us to be efficient and effective. Investments made this year to improve our operational capability, productivity and effectiveness included upgrading and strengthening our capabilities in digital and transformation, expanding our fundraising activity to grow more income streams, and establishing new student data exchange arrangements.

We also invested in improving our data security, upgrading our finance system, and enhancing our records and contract management processes.

We are encouraged that more of our funders and partners are now openly engaging with us to understand our business model and to explore effective ways to support our crucial services.

Our promise to all our partners is to use donated funds in the most efficient manner to deliver quality and highly impactful programs. Targeted and strategic investments enable this, and they are also essential for building the robust infrastructure needed to ensure strong governance and sustainability. By working together, we are creating a more resilient organisation that can adapt to change and continue to address the causes of educational disadvantage in Australia.

Empowering our people

Another major focus has been on strengthening our organisational culture to support our strategic goals. We launched a new Culture Initiative, which included assessing our current culture and defining our ideal. We also finalised our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy and Roadmap 2024–26, underscoring our commitment to an inclusive, respectful and equitable workplace. Initiatives in the coming year include developing related policies and increasing training.

The Smith Family is developing a new Enterprise Agreement (EA) to replace our Community Programs Agreement (2016). In March 2024, we paused EA negotiations after signing an MOU with the Australian Services Union, to complete important structural work on position classification. During the year, we updated policies and applied wage rate increases for team members covered by the EA.

We also reviewed the entitlements of team members under the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010. With an independent expert's help, we investigated current and former team members' entitlements since 1 February 2017. We are taking steps to ensure that all affected team members received their applicable entitlements, including by making remediation payments as needed. We aim to finish addressing any issues for former team members by the end of 2024.

Our commitment to child safety

As part of our commitment to being a child safe organisation, we engaged the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) to review our child safeguarding governance arrangements in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, state and territory legislation, and the National Office for Child Safety's *Child Safety Risk Management Guide*. The ACF also reviewed our compliance with the key requirements set out in our Child Protection Framework.

They determined that we have a strong child safety culture and appropriate governance structures. However, there are opportunities to improve our systematic monitoring and analysis, through training, and by incorporating the 'voice of the child' into our work, which we plan to implement from 2024–25.

Progressing our Reconciliation Action Plan

Over the past 12 months, we completed our current Reconciliation Action Plan and made good progress against our targets. This involved developing meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal-owned organisations, and we continue to build our cultural capability and ensure our programs are accessible and relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. The number of *Learning for Life* students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples increased to 16,924 (25.2%), up from 15,020 last year.

Acknowledgements

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude to the children, young people and families we support, for their dedication to education and to creating better futures for themselves.

We would like to acknowledge the support of our Patrons, Their Excellencies, the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and VIEW Clubs of Australia Patron, Mrs Linda Hurley.

We are grateful to our Board members and advisory groups for their commitment, expertise and insights.

We also thank the 194,903 sponsors and donors, 4,913 volunteers and 13,264 members of VIEW Clubs of Australia who supported us this year. We are equally grateful to our 67 corporate partners, such as ANZ and Officeworks; our 170 trust and foundation partners, including the Paul Ramsay Foundation and Equity Trustees; our 11 university and multiple community partners; as well as the Australian Government and the state and territory governments that provided us with critical support during the year.

We would also like to express our gratitude to our partner schools and the many non-government organisations we worked with for their shared commitment to our purpose.

We continue to appreciate the voluntary efforts of our ambassadors and champions – Sarah Harris, Brooke Boney and Dr Craig Challen SC OAM – and thank them for their involvement in our work.

Lastly, we express our gratitude and appreciation to our team members. We truly appreciate their dedication and hard work and thank them for their support this year.

With the ongoing help of these individuals and groups, we have been able to work with many thousands of children, young people and their families. It is inspiring to all of us at The Smith Family and our stakeholders to see children grasp the opportunity to make the most of their education, and to change their futures.

Directors who retired during 2023–24

This year, Dr Jeffrey Harmer AO and Mark Johnson retired from The Smith Family's Board after many years of dedicated service. We acknowledge their valuable contribution to our work and wish them well in the future.

Nicholas Moore AO, Chairman
Doug Taylor, Chief Executive Officer

Students in our **Learning for Life** program face complex and cumulative challenges:



All live in **low-income families.**



More than half live in a **single-parent family.**



Around one-third of students and a similar proportion of parents or carers have a **disability or health issue.**



About half have a parent or carer who **didn't finish Year 12 or equivalent.**



Around three-quarters have a parent or carer who **is not in paid employment.**



30% of school-aged *Learning for Life* students **do not have a laptop or tablet and live in a household without mobile or broadband internet.** The figure for secondary students is 20%.

Compounding effects of disadvantage

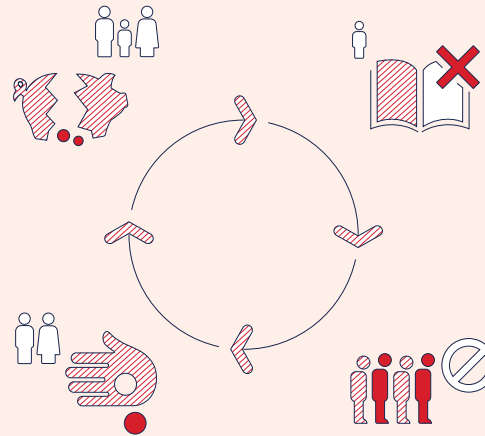
The risk factors that can lead to educational disadvantage can begin in a child's early years and continue throughout their school lives. This cycle shows that the contributors to disadvantage are complex, and without the right support at the right time the effects can be long term and intergenerational.

1. Family challenges

These may include sickness, disability, unemployment, difficulty affording basic living costs, inability to provide resources for their child's education, limited access to digital technology and skills, and a lack of knowledge or confidence about how best to support children's educational development.

4. Overall life outcomes impacted

Inability to get ahead in life, health and wellbeing affected, passing disadvantage on to the next generation.



2. Reduced educational outcomes for children

Behind in essential skills when they start school, not having the items they need to fit in, having limited access to resources for learning development, falling behind at school and facing difficulty in catching up, and having limited access to the support needed for guiding study and/or career paths.

3. Difficulty getting a job

A lack of engagement and motivation with their education, lower educational performance, leaving school early with few or no qualifications, fewer job opportunities, and having limited connections to community networks and services.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support and capacity building

I've been a Family Partnerships Coordinator at The Smith Family for almost four years. I really love the challenges of my role, as well as it being a very rewarding one. I enjoy engaging with *Learning for Life* families — consolidating, engaging, motivating, exploring and planning with them about their child's educational journey. We support the education of the children by helping them overcome barriers to school attendance and engagement. We also work in partnership with the family, to encourage capacity building of the parents and caregivers.

I work collaboratively with families to support their child's attendance and help them overcome any barriers that are linked to school attendance. I refer families to appropriate supports, such as through schools and other community services.



Amy, Family Partnerships Coordinator

In addition, I also try to link students with our programs. We've seen that program participation can impact not only a student's grades, but also their self-esteem, which increases their level of attendance.

By referring families to an appropriate service or program, it usually leads to a good outcome, where students want to attend school and remain engaged with their education.

I work with many families who didn't have the educational opportunities [available today]. It is amazing when you hear about a student who is the first from their family to go to university. Knowing that I have helped made a difference brings me immense joy.

Amy
Family Partnerships Coordinator

How we work to make a difference

What we bring >

214,198 children, young people and their parents/carers engaged with *Learning for Life* and wraparound programs this year

Practice excellence: Frontline team members incorporate evidence-based tools with families to help them set and work towards self-determined goals for their child's education

Partnerships with supporters: including individuals, corporates, trusts and foundations, and governments

Our 982 team members and 4,913 volunteers working collectively to achieve our vision

An empowering culture and focus on outcomes

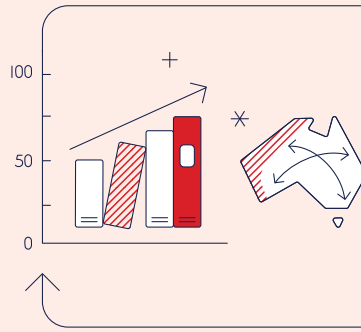
A long history of supporting the education of Australian children and our strong and trusted brand

Sound governance and risk management: our Board oversees our Executive's focus on delivering our strategy and applying our resources efficiently, effectively and responsibly, in a manner that is aligned with our purpose and commitment to child safety, reconciliation and sustainability

Data and systems including longitudinal data on what makes a difference for children and young people

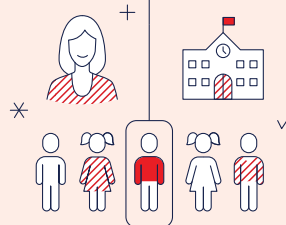
What we do >

Advocacy and influence for system change so that every child has the opportunity to change their future



Evaluation and measurement: Contribution to overall evidence base and adjusting our course for impact

Program delivery to build skills and knowledge and influence attitudes and behaviours. Programs include *Learning for Life*, other wraparound and community programs and digital inclusion support



Community and school engagement: To understand needs and identify families for support

Program development for continuous improvement of our practice framework, research, innovation and data analysis



Creating lasting change

What we deliver >



Improved outcomes for children and young people



Increased number of students supported: *Learning for Life* scholarships and short-course programs



Advocacy submissions



Strong community partnerships



Strong financial stewardship



Benefits to team members and volunteers



Child safety and strong governance and risk practices, including for cyber security

2023–24 progress >

83.8%

average school attendance of *Learning for Life* students

64%

of students in Year 10 advanced to Year 12 by 2023

83%

of students in Year 12 in 2022 were in work and/or study 18 months after leaving school

96%

of students taking part in our *student2student* program improved their reading

178,430

children and young people participated in our programs

67,165

students in our *Learning for Life* program

6,425

devices issued through *Digital Learning Essentials* program since 2023

55

advocacy products



16

policy submissions



33

external presentations



4

publications

2

webinars

We partnered with **784 schools in 91 communities** to deliver *Learning for Life*

\$136.6 million

donated by individual supporters, bequestors and our philanthropic partners to assist children and young people

Salary uplifts and introduction of new contemporary leave types, extra gifted days, new learning and training opportunities, and new volunteering opportunities















Updated our Risk Management Framework and developed new contract and records management processes; had our Child Protection Framework independently reviewed



Our strategy

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Ambition | <p>We will deepen our impact and empower young Australians experiencing disadvantage to create a better future for themselves. To do this, we will use personalised, evidence-based practice, data and digital. We are committed to growing the number of <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarship recipients to 100,000 and expanding our programs to reach 250,000 children and young people.</p> | | | |
| Our goals | IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES MEASURED BY: | | | |
| | Attendance at school | Advancement through school from Year 10 to completion of Year 12 or equivalent | Tertiary completion | Engagement in study or work post-school |
| | WE AIM TO GROW: | | | |
| | Scholarships: to 100,000 <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarships | Program reach: to 250,000 program participants | Program participation rates: to 50% of <i>Learning for Life</i> students participating in our programs | Digital inclusion: ensuring 100% of <i>Learning for Life</i> students are digitally included |
| | | | | Funding: to \$220 million in sustainable funding |

To achieve these goals, we have developed our strategy around nine strategic priorities and foundations.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Our strategic priorities and foundations  | DEEPER IMPACT THROUGH STRENGTHENED PRACTICE ENABLED BY DATA AND DIGITAL | | | |
| |  | Strengthen impact in <i>Learning for Life</i> Deepen long-term, evidence-based, personalised practice for <i>Learning for Life</i> recipients to improve student outcomes, including through programs, enabled by data. | | |
| |  | Leverage digital and partners Leverage a greater range of partnerships for delivery of short-course programs. Increase digital delivery of short-course programs, with a consistent approach to digitisation. | | |
| |  | Expand digital inclusion Ensure all <i>Learning for Life</i> students are digitally included. | | |
| | BROADER REACH | | | |
| |  | Grow reach Grow <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarships and program reach, focusing on existing <i>Learning for Life</i> communities. |  | Grow influence Grow influence through advocacy in our priority domains to improve the lives of children living in disadvantage. Differentiate ourselves through a refreshed brand. |
| | STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS TO ENABLE DEEPER IMPACT AND BROADER REACH | | | |
| |  | Grow sustainable funding |  | Empower our people |
| |  | Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data |  | Strengthen governance, risk management and compliance focus |
| Our commitments |  Be a child safe organisation |  Strive for reconciliation and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples |  Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion |  Improve our environmental sustainability |

Our highlights from 2023–24

Deeper impact

► Strengthen impact in *Learning for Life*

- ✓ We surveyed *Learning for Life* families and tertiary students with our Family Impact Measure survey.
- ✓ We entered into data exchange agreements with the education departments of Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland to give frontline team members access to vital real-time educational information on the students we help, enabling us to improve our support.

► Leverage digital and partners

- ✓ We continued developing a tailored content strategy for engaging families we support.
- ✓ We expanded our offer of adaptive learning applications.
- ✓ We enhanced our *Growing Careers Project* operations to increase impact.

► Expand digital inclusion

- ✓ We delivered an additional 3,774 digital devices.
- ✓ 33,397 students and family members continue to be connected to the internet through the Optus Donate Your Data® initiative.

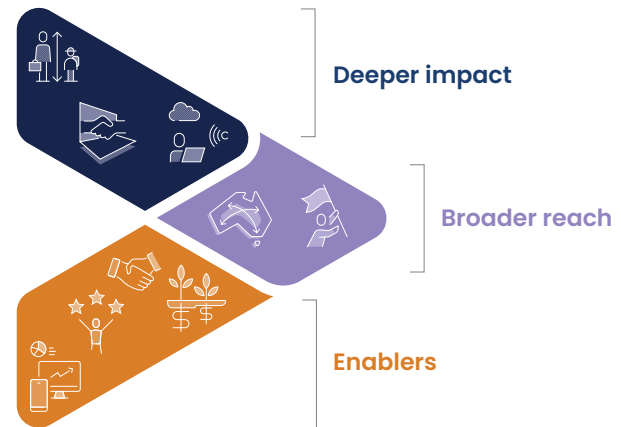
Broader reach

► Grow reach

- ✓ There were 67,165 students in our *Learning for Life* program, up from 62,822 last year.
- ✓ 178,430 children and young people across Australia participated in our programs.

► Grow influence

- ✓ We authored 16 public policy submissions and four publications, produced public webinars and a podcast and video series.
- ✓ We partnered on the Australian Research Council's *Advancing Digital Inclusion in Low Income Australian Families* project to contribute to an evidence base on digital inclusion issues.
- ✓ We engaged students and young people in our longitudinal research, including through the *Pathways, Engagement and Transitions* project, which provided opportunities to enhance our program effectiveness and advocacy.



Strategic foundations

► Grow sustainable funding

- ✓ We exceeded fundraising targets through strong appeals and service, and through high-value donor, partner and customer relationship management.
- ✓ By year-end, we had 67,282 active individual sponsors of students on *Learning for Life*.
- ✓ Major donors, corporate partners, trusts and foundations, event participants and community fundraisers gave \$39 million to support our work, and individual donors gave \$14.8 million through our appeals.
- ✓ Our customer service team achieved a 96.7% customer satisfaction rating.

► Empower our people

- ✓ We achieved an employment engagement score of 73%, surpassing the 68% Not-For-Profit benchmark.
- ✓ We began a Culture Initiative to review and enhance our organisational culture in support of our strategy goals.
- ✓ We contributed to the *National Strategy for Volunteering* and elevated volunteer effectiveness through enhanced registration, screening, matching and compliance training.

► Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data

- ✓ 86% of *Learning for Life* families we support engaged with our My Smith Family portal; and we improved their ability to self-serve online.
- ✓ We invested in strategic transformation programs like NextGen to identify areas to digitise and automate program processes and to co-design future-focused solutions.
- ✓ We continued to enhance our supporter experience online, and to automate supporter processes, creating time savings as well as improving service.

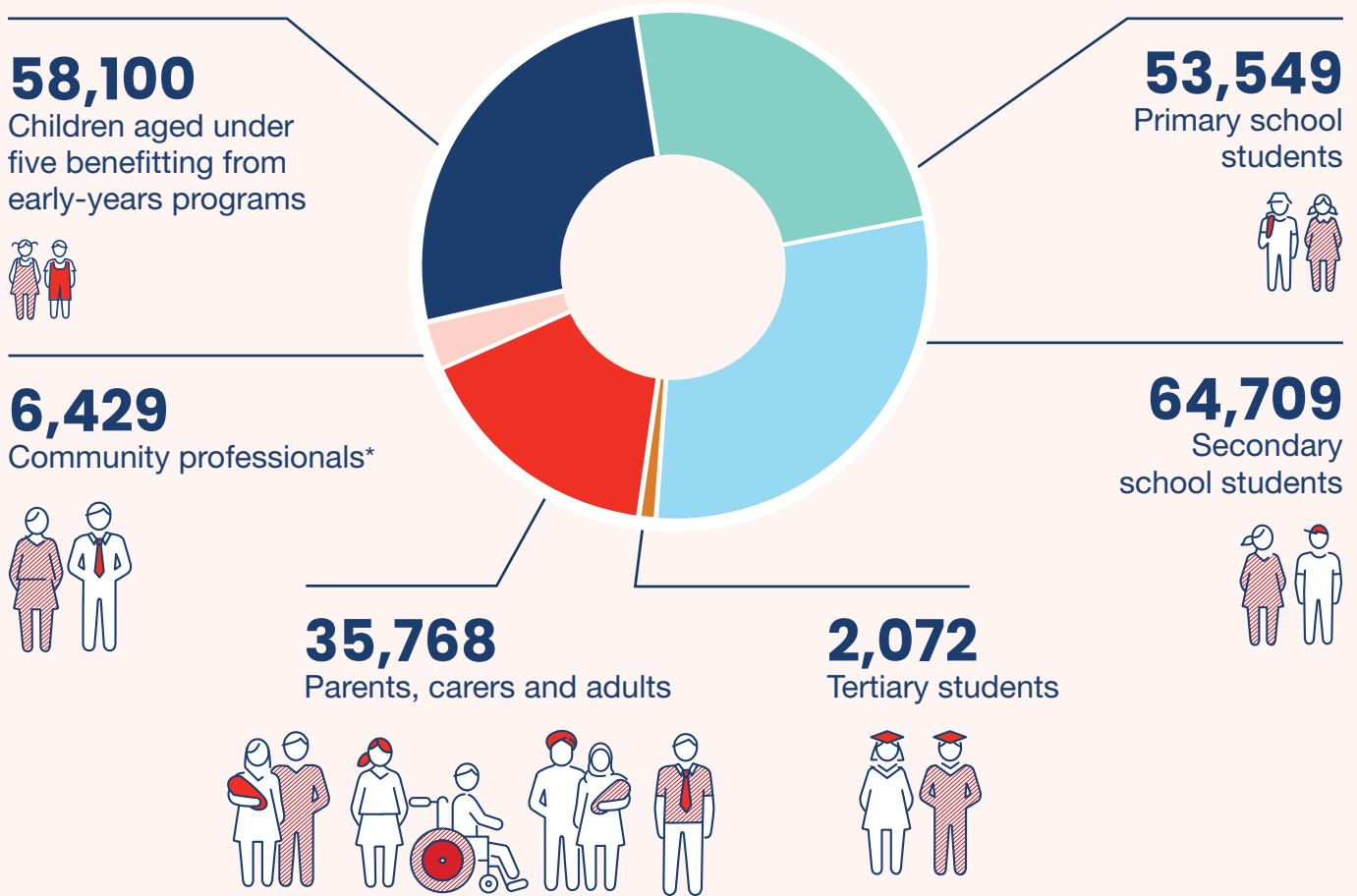
► Strengthen governance, risk management and compliance focus

- ✓ We bolstered child safeguarding with an enhanced human resources system and undertook an independent review of our governance.
- ✓ We continued to uplift our digital and data security posture through our ongoing Cyber Resilience program.
- ✓ We upgraded our finance systems and our records and contract management.

Our progress

220,627 participants

The Smith Family reached 220,627 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals in 2023–24, up 10.5% on the previous year.



178,430

children and young people participated in our programs in 2023–24

67,165

Learning for Life sponsorship recipients

* Community professionals (not Smith Family team members) include early-years educators and program facilitators in communities.

91 Communities

in which *Learning for Life* programs are delivered



Learning for Life participation

25.2%

of sponsored students (16,924) in 2023–24 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

We partnered with

784 schools

attended by *Learning for Life* students

213,080 Individual supporters

194,903

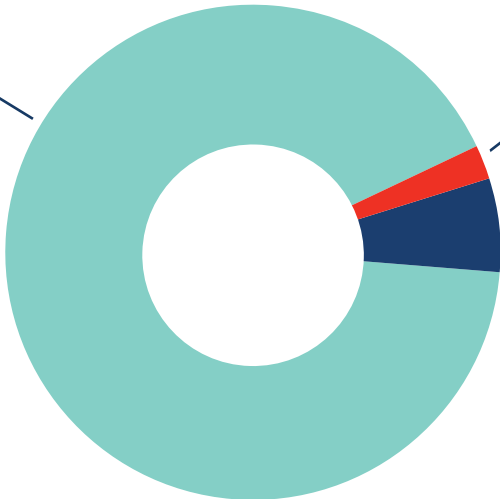
Sponsors and donors

▶ **67,282**

sponsors of *Learning for Life* students

▶ **127,621**

donors funding *Learning for Life* programs



4,913

individual volunteers

13,264

members in 268 VIEW Clubs of Australia

248 Partner organisations

- 67** corporate partners
- 170** trusts and foundations
- 11** tertiary institutions





Deeper impact

through strengthened practice enabled by data and digital

IMPACT IN ACTION

Creating a better future

"I couldn't ask for a better support system than what I have from The Smith Family. Both my sons, Ethan and Cooper, are on the *Learning for Life* sponsorship. When I was offered the support, I was in a bad marriage and struggling financially.

The *Learning for Life* support has helped us in leaps and bounds. It's meant being able to afford the good uniforms for school, shoes when they get holes, excursions, camps and school photos. Cooper also absolutely loves going to Learning Club. The people there give him extra help if he needs it.

All the support from The Smith Family is amazing. There's not just one thing. I feel lucky because my kids have a lot of opportunities due to The Smith Family – things like being able to have the proper school uniform and not scraping the bottom of the barrel to pay for them to go on an excursion.

My sons' education is important to me because I want them to do better than what I've done. I want them to own their own house and own their own car. I want them to have a better career.

Without The Smith Family, things would have been a lot harder. I am so forever grateful for what The Smith Family sponsors have done for the boys. I really do appreciate it."

Amanda
Learning for Life mum



A different type of learning

"I've been going to Learning Club since Year 1. I like doing homework and hanging out with my friends after I've finished my homework.

I like all the tutors there. They help me with spelling and reading.

I definitely enjoy going to school, even though I'm a little scared about going into Year 7."

Cooper
Learning for Life student

Our approach

Research shows that when children are supported to thrive in their education, it can help them to create a better future for themselves. Our long-term educational support focuses on helping young people realise their potential, by removing the barriers associated with living in poverty.

Our approach supports families from their children's pre-school years until they finish their education. In the early years, we help parents and local providers to develop children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills, so they are ready to start and flourish at school. During the school and tertiary years, The Smith Family works collaboratively with families in the *Learning for Life* program, delivering positive educational outcomes for children and young people.

Learning for Life provides each student:

- financial assistance to help pay for school essentials like uniforms, textbooks, digital tools and excursions
- support from a Family Partnerships Coordinator (FPC), who works closely with them and their family to problem-solve any barriers to education
- access to various short programs to improve literacy, numeracy and digital literacy outcomes and connections to mentoring and career-related opportunities.

Our approach also focuses on building each family's capacity to engage in their child's learning. We do this because studies show that children whose parents are involved in their education, regardless of their income or background, are more likely to succeed in school, graduate and undertake further study. Our FPCs work with families to set achievable goals relevant to their circumstances and provide coaching support and/or referral to other support services as necessary.

During the year, we continued to refine and embed our Family Practice Framework, which guides our work and ensures we give our families the best possible support to improve their child's educational outcomes. This involves working collaboratively with families to create safe, respectful, understanding and trusting environments.

In March 2024, we launched the Family Impact Measure for all students and families participating in *Learning for Life*. This outcomes measurement activity will enable us to obtain useful data on the impact of the support component of the program.

Deepening our impact

The goal of our work with children and families is to deepen our long-term impact. We focus on three strategic priorities – strengthening the impact of our *Learning for Life* program, leveraging digital and partners for growth and innovation, and expanding digital inclusion to ensure students and families have the resources and digital access needed to operate in today's world.

Strategic priority 1

Strengthening the impact of our work

We measure our impact by tracking the educational outcomes of students participating in our *Learning for Life* program. We track their attendance at school, whether they complete Year 12 or equivalent, and their participation in further study or work after completing our program. (For results, see data on page 18.)

This year, we surveyed all *Learning for Life* families and tertiary students, using our Family Impact Measure for the first time. It was co-designed with *Learning for Life* families, and is focused on helping us understand the impact of the support component of the *Learning for Life* program. It also measures factors such as readiness and confidence to seek support when needed, and families' understanding of how to help with their children's education. Notably, when measuring family confidence in seeking support, 80% of families said they would contact The Smith Family for support if needed, exceeding our goal of 75%.

This year we continued developing a tailored content strategy to better engage the families we work with from their first, early engagement with us. By prioritising early engagement, we can foster stronger connections between families and our educational programs.

Following the success of our Education Dashboard South Australia (EDSA), developed with the South Australian Department for Education, we launched the Education Dashboard Tasmania (EDTAS), with the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People. EDSA won the 2024 Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Award for Best Use of Data for Community Impact. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare also recognised EDSA in its *Australia's Welfare 2023 Data Insights* report.



We focus on digital inclusion for all students.

Strategic priority 2

Leverage digital and partners

We are developing partnerships to support growth and innovation in our short-course programs.

Our goal is to increase children's participation in our wraparound programs, to help keep them engaged at school and increase their likelihood of completing Year 12.

This year, we focused on providing more personalised learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of our students. Digital delivery enables us to implement programs for students outside the school setting. It also enables us to provide programs at scale, more efficiently and effectively.

We also continued to focus on digitising our program delivery processes to make them simpler and more consistent. We're streamlining our suite of digital tools to make processes quicker and easier for students, families, schools and collaborators. We made good progress improving our processes this year, including increasing self-service for *Learning for Life* families and launching more online registration processes for families.

Partnering with others enable us to provide diverse experiences for the students we support and offer them an extended range of opportunities. During the year, we worked with partners across Australia to offer our *Careers Activities* program to 29,486 students. This program aims to build students' confidence, support them to think about their futures, and broaden their understanding of what's possible after school.

Strategic priority 3

Expand digital inclusion

We aim to ensure all *Learning for Life* students are digitally included.

Being digitally included means that students have access to a reliable device that's connected to the internet and can be used for educational purposes and technical support. It also enables students to develop their understanding and use of technology, and their ability to seek solutions, and to keep themselves safe online.

Thirty per cent of *Learning for Life* students are not digitally included, meaning they don't have access to a laptop or tablet in a household with mobile or broadband internet. This year, depending on their needs, families were offered a laptop and/or internet access, and technical support. As a result, 3,774 digital devices were delivered. This takes the number of devices issued through our *Digital Learning Essentials* program to 6,425 since the program began in 2023.

Additionally, through the support of valued partner Optus, 33,397 students and family members continued to be connected through the Optus Donate Your Data® initiative.

A further 1,908 families were connected to the internet through the Australian Government's School Student Broadband Initiative. The Smith Family has supported around 13% of the 15,000 students signed up to the program nationally, since it was announced in 2023.

Our work continued to be facilitated by our partnership with the social enterprise, Work Ventures, which supplied us with 6,400 refurbished laptops, the majority going to students transitioning to high school.

This year, we surveyed families who had received a device and/or internet connection, receiving over 3,000 responses from *Learning for Life* parents/carers. Families provided feedback on how having a device and/or the internet has impacted their family. Many of them had previously not had a device, or had shared one device among many people within the household. Almost all (95%) parents reported that having the device helped their children with their schooling, and 89% reported that it supported communication with their child's school.

We continue to work with our partners and networks to develop a sustainable sector-wide approach to digital inclusion. As part of our advocacy in this space, we partnered on the Australian Research Council's *Advancing Digital Inclusion in Low Income Australian Families* project to contribute to a comprehensive evidence base on the issues affecting digital inclusion.



Our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

In 2021, 58% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 to 24 and who were living in the most disadvantaged communities had attained Year 12 or equivalent, compared to 87% of those living in Australia's most advantaged communities. This disparity highlights the relationship between poverty and educational outcomes for First Nations people.¹

The challenge

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' educational outcomes may be affected by a variety of complex social and systemic factors. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and organisations, and governments, education providers and communities continue to use best efforts to support and improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. However, many have poorer educational outcomes overall than non-Indigenous students.

Working closely with communities and providing regular, targeted and appropriate support can help students to engage with their learning. This support needs to form part of a fundamental shift in the current systems, operations and ways of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and their families and communities.²

16,924

Learning for Life students
identify as Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander people

How we help

This year, 16,924 (25.2%) of students in our *Learning for Life* program identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, up from 15,020 (23.9%).

Our 2021–24 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) continued to provide a framework for our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and students. Following discussions with Reconciliation Australia and our National Advisory Group on Issues Concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, we initiated a process of broad consultation for the development of our next RAP, which will include the voices of families we support.

We continue to champion our RAP and its goals internally and our leaders play an active role in delivering on our RAP commitments. As part of our commitment, 166 of our team members undertook an e-learning cultural program, 331 participated in a cultural program, and 283 completed a cultural immersion program. During the year, we had 10 formal and 32 informal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations or businesses. We strive to ensure that these partnerships are mutually beneficial.

This year, we began a new initiative to hear from Queensland *Learning for Life* families about the challenges they face in staying engaged in education, and how we might adapt our services and support to better meet their needs. Their input will inform trials of different ways of working in communities.

¹ Productivity Commission 2023, Closing the Gap Repository.

² Productivity Commission (2023), *Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, Draft Report.

Supporting a child's educational journey

Early years

When starting school, one in three children in Australia's most disadvantaged communities is developmentally vulnerable in at least one of five key areas, including language and cognitive development. In the least disadvantaged communities, this figure is around one in six.¹

The challenge

Starting school is a significant milestone for every child and their family. The abilities children can draw on when they begin school affect their engagement in learning and their academic success. This makes it even more critical for every pre-schooler to have the chance to develop the basic language, numeracy, physical, social and emotional skills they need to achieve positive educational outcomes later in life.

How we help

This year, we reviewed The Smith Family's role in the early years to determine where we can best add value. This included assessing how our *Let's Read*, *Let's Count* and *Communities for Children* programs and *Child and Parent Centres* contribute to our effectiveness. The findings were positive, showing that these programs are achieving great outcomes and are valued by the community, our government partners and external experts.

We also explored additional initiatives for the early years using insights from consultations and a desktop analysis, including inputs from the Australian Early Development Census. Feedback from *Learning for Life* families helped us to refine our ideas.

We revised our numeracy program, *Let's Count*, to increase community engagement and cultural relevance. The refreshed version was rolled out nationally in 2024. In collaboration with academic partners and with the generous support of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies, we reviewed our early literacy program, *Let's Read*.

In nine communities across Australia, we worked strategically with a broad range of partners to deliver place-based activities funded under the Australian Government's *Communities for Children Facilitating Partner* initiative. This year, we supported a national forum in celebration of this great program.

Key programs include: *Communities for Children* (3,597 participants), *Let's Count* (28,585 participants), *Let's Read* (24,816 participants) and *Child and Parent Centres* (1,040 participants).

Primary years

Thirty per cent of Year 5 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 need additional support in numeracy. This figure is 3% for Year 5 students whose parents have a university degree.²

The challenge

Children and young people experiencing disadvantage often face complex socioeconomic challenges that make it difficult for them to remain engaged at school. They are more likely to encounter systemic barriers within the education and broader human services systems than other young people. Young people experiencing disadvantage are also more likely to enter school developmentally behind their advantaged peers. Families also often struggle to access essential services such as housing, health care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. When families don't have access to the support networks they need to thrive, this can directly impact children's educational outcomes.

How we help

Through their participation in *Learning for Life*, we help young people access opportunities to build the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that help with their school engagement and educational outcomes.

As students move through primary school, we work with their families to provide a range of education supports. These include funds that help buy school essentials such as uniforms, shoes and stationery, and pay for extra-curricular activities. If a child needs extra support with literacy or numeracy, we offer our Learning Clubs, where trained volunteer tutors assist with homework or specific skill sets.

When students get to Year 6, we help to smooth their transition to high school, often a pivotal moment in their educational journey. Our Family Partnerships Coordinators work closely with families to assess students' preparedness for high school and address any issues they may be facing. These family check-ins provide an opportunity to build trusting relationships.

This year, over 4,800 primary school students took part in our *Passport to Success* program, helping them to learn the importance of schoolwork self-management, increase their learning motivation, and build a greater understanding of what high school will be like.

Key programs include: *Communities for Children* (11,506 participants), *Passport to Success* (4,824 students) and Learning Club (2,459 students). 32,833 primary years students are sponsored through *Learning for Life*.

58,100 children aged under five participating in early-years programs

53,549 primary years students participating in programs

1 Australian Government, *Australian Early Development Census National Report 2021: Early Childhood Development in Australia*, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Canberra, 2022.

2 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2023), *NAPLAN national results*. acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results

Secondary years

Around 28% of Year 9 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 need additional support in reading. This figure is only 3% for Year 9 students whose parents have a university degree.¹

The challenge

The secondary school years can be difficult for young people as they deal with physical, social and emotional changes. This is also when students are expected to take more responsibility for academic organisation, and when teacher support decreases and the volume of schoolwork increases. Young people require skills and support to navigate a much larger, more complex school environment and to ensure they complete Year 12 and can more easily navigate post-school pathways. For young people experiencing disadvantage, financial hardship, complex relationships and family health issues can make these years particularly challenging.

How we help

This year, we partnered with secondary schools and communities to deliver a range of education and career-related programs and activities. These included *Future Seekers*, designed to increase students' understanding of the skills required in the world of work, and how their own interests and skills can be applied across a variety of jobs and careers.

We also worked with employers to deliver *Work Inspiration*, which gives students opportunities to explore career paths, experience the world of work first-hand and talk to staff members in various workplaces about their roles.

Providing targeted support to families with students in Year 9 has been a particular focus this year. In these conversations, Family Partnerships Coordinators explore how engaged each young person is in their education and identify any barriers or issues. They can also support families in exploring post-school pathways and link them to career support in schools and communities.

Key programs include *Career Activities* (27,048 students), *SmArts* (1,372 students) and *Work Inspiration* (2,053 students). 32,640 secondary years students are sponsored through *Learning for Life*.

64,709 students participating in programs

Post-school years

Almost half (49%) of 24-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are not fully engaged in work or study, compared to 18% of those from the most advantaged backgrounds.²

The challenge

The post-school transition into work and further study is critical for young people. For those experiencing disadvantage, the cost of transport, textbooks and other necessities can exacerbate the financial pressure on their families. At the same time, students must adjust to a self-paced workload and timetable, and a wider range of academic choices. In families where a student is the first to participate in tertiary education, access to mentors and other support may be limited.

How we help

We start our post-school support while students are in secondary school by providing careers-focused programs and opportunities to explore post-school options.

We provide financial support for nearly 1,700 students through our Tertiary Scholarship. Our specialist Tertiary Support Co-ordinators also help students navigate tertiary systems and potential barriers to participation.

Taking part in work placement opportunities is often challenging for students experiencing disadvantage. To assist, we offer *Cadetship to Career*, which links some students on our Tertiary Scholarship with employers for paid, flexible, multi-year cadetship opportunities.

In recognition of the significant policy focus by the Australian Government in the higher education space this year, we reviewed our support to ensure we are well placed to respond to any changes.

2,072 tertiary students are participating in programs such as the *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship (1,692 students), *Job Read-e* (138 students) and *Cadetship to Career* (31 students).

2,072 tertiary students participating in programs

¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2023), *NAPLAN national results*. acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results

² Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Marie, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J., & Endekov, Z. (2020), *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out*. Melbourne: Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University for the Mitchell Institute. vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/educational-opportunity-in-australia-2020.pdf

We track our results

We track the progress of *Learning for Life* students against four longer-term outcomes: school attendance; completion of Year 12 or its equivalent; completion of tertiary studies; and post-school engagement in education, training or work. We also assess the short-term outcomes of our programs as these help to put children on the path to reaching the four longer-term goals.

1. Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for students to achieve positive educational outcomes.

2. Advancement

Each year of schooling a child completes leads to better overall life outcomes and improves their ability to make economic and social contributions to the community.

83.8%

was the **average attendance** for **Years 1–10 *Learning for Life* students in 2023.**

86.4% for primary school students, **78.8%** for secondary school students, **79.9%** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

64%

of *Learning for Life* students in **Year 10 in 2021 advanced to Year 12 by 2023.**

Improved numeracy

Improved literacy

Increased academic engagement and achievement

Increased self-management and confidence

Let's Count

82%

of surveyed participants reported improved capacity to work with parents/carers to support the emergent numeracy of their children.

Let's Read

96%

of early years professionals reported an increased capacity to engage families to foster children's literacy development.

student2student

96%

of students improved their reading, with 75% increasing their reading level by up to two years.

Passport to Success

80%

of students increased their understanding of what to expect at high school.

Longer-term results

Short-term results

Program results

3. Tertiary completion rate

Our Tertiary Completion Rate measures the proportion of students who complete a qualification in four years.

47%

of *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship students who commenced study in 2020 had **completed a qualification** by 2023.

National four-year Bachelor completion rates for low socioeconomic students, was 36.6% (2019-22).*

*Department of Education, 2024

4. *Learning for Life* students engaged in post-school education, employment or training

A key indicator of our approach's success is the proportion of *Learning for Life* students who transition successfully from school to further education, training or employment.

83%

of students who were in Year 12 in 2022, **were in education, employment or training 18 months after leaving school.**

Enhanced networks and relationships

Improved knowledge and understanding of study options and career paths

Improved knowledge and understanding of financial management

iTrack

Work Inspiration

Saver Plus

80%

of students reported *iTrack* improved their knowledge of the post-school options and pathways available to them.

79%

of students reported increased awareness of core employability skills needed in the workplace, (i.e) teamwork and communication.

91%

of participants successfully completed the program and reached a savings goal, and 87% are saving the same or more three to seven years after completing the program.



Broader reach

We are committed to growing our reach and influence so we can help thousands more Australian children and young people to achieve their full potential through education.

IMPACT IN ACTION

A weight off her shoulders



Kate and her children

“When I was asked if I wanted my daughter Anika to join the *Learning for Life* program, I said yes because it means she won’t go down the same track I did.

I left school in Year 10 to get a full-time job, because I wasn’t living at home. School was a struggle because my parents didn’t have much money. I don’t want my kids to have to struggle like that.

My daughter, Anika, and my son, RJ, both have [*Learning for Life*] sponsors. It means that they will have every opportunity to go to uni if they want to, once they finish high school. The Smith Family has given them more opportunities than I ever had as a kid.

When I found out about The Smith Family, I was struggling. I have issues with my back so I haven’t been able to work properly. Because of COVID and the price increases, I was in a bad spot where my daughter only had one school shirt with the school logo on it.

The rest were cheap shirts from a store, and her shoes cost \$8 from the same place.

With the sponsorship, I was able to buy her a school uniform for every day of week. We bought shoes that last the whole year, instead of just a month, and she’s able to go on all the excursions. This year, I could pay for her to do swimming lessons with the school, which I couldn’t afford before.

Having The Smith Family’s support means my kids are getting better every year with their education. It’s giving them the motivation to want to do well.

For me, it’s changed my outlook on life. I didn’t know if I would be able to get my kids through school. Now it’s a weight off my shoulders knowing that they have help.”

Kate
Learning for Life parent

Strategic priority 4

Grow reach

We aim to increase the number of *Learning for Life* scholarships we offer, as well as students' participation in our wraparound programs and activities.

In 2023–24, we continued to balance growth in the number of participants in our programs with our objective of improving our overall practice and deepening our impact.

With our goal of ensuring quality practice to improve students' educational outcomes, we are taking a more flexible approach to the target dates for achieving our growth goals. These are having 100,000 students in the *Learning for Life* scholarship program and reaching 250,000 children and young people with our programs and activities. This year, 67,165 students participated in *Learning for Life*, up 7% from 2022–23, and 178,430 children and young people participated in our programs and activities, an increase of 10% on the previous year.

We continued to implement frameworks to enhance relationships with families and schools. In the year ahead, we will work more deeply with schools we have a strong partnership with, to provide more programs and opportunities for *Learning for Life* students attending them. Our key aim for our work in community is to improve outcomes for the students we support.

In 2023–24, we also refreshed our approach to our programs to ensure we are providing *Learning for Life* students with relevant and responsive wraparound support.

Our education and career-related programs and activities provide skills and knowledge designed to help students navigate the worlds of work and further study. In line with our push towards supporting students to make positive post-school transitions, our *Career Activities* program reached a significant number of primary and secondary school students, with 29,486 participations this year, up 30% on the previous year. We also provided digital support to 5,682 students – up 68% on the previous year – in accordance with our strategic focus on expanding digital inclusion. Our support includes providing access to digital resources, growing students' digital skills and providing access to the internet at home.

We also trialled different delivery models, including providing programs that students can access at home and in the community.



Rebecca and her daughter, Aleya

IMPACT IN ACTION

Reading support that makes a difference

“My daughter, Aleya, started doing the *student2student* reading program in Year 3. At the time, her reading wasn't the best. I tried to encourage her to read, but she didn't want to do it. When I told her she could read with an older kid and that they would help her, she said she would give it a shot. She absolutely loved it and it's helped her a lot.

Her reading has improved so much. It was almost non-existent. She could read some things, but she wouldn't read a whole book without going 'um, ah'. Now she'll read all sorts of things and she can read a lot of big words.

She seems to enjoy reading with someone else. We've done some reading together but I think she gets more of a kick out of reading with another younger person. She even wants to be a reading buddy when she finishes being a reader. She wants to help someone else out.

Without the reading program, I don't think Aleya would be coping at school. She's having some trouble because she's a little behind, but it would be 10 times worse if she didn't have *student2student* to help her. I think it's helped her get further ahead.

I think every kid deserves to have a good education no matter what sort of circumstances they're under. The Smith Family has really helped make it easier for me to get Aleya what she needs for school. And she's able to participate in the reading program that has really helped her out.”

Rebecca
Learning for Life parent

IMPACT IN ACTION

Levelling the playing field

“I’ve been supported by The Smith Family from a very young age. My dad left when I was young, and my family became a single-parent household. We were very poor.

As a kid, I remember my mum struggling to buy uniforms, and in high school it was a struggle to get textbooks and supplies. Those memories are quite vivid. There are other memories of Mum being stressed about rent or food.

The *Learning for Life* sponsorship definitely helped. By providing me with a uniform and textbooks, the program has put me on the same field as my classmates. When I didn’t have these things, I was always comparing myself to other students and I felt inferior. Being able to get textbooks and uniforms meant I was finally on the same level as my peers.

I’m now in my second year at Monash University, studying engineering. Even without The Smith Family I think I would have gone to uni, but I would have really struggled and I would have been a lot less confident. I wouldn’t have been able to afford the materials I needed to learn, so I would have been behind.

The Smith Family has changed my life in small ways, big ways and probably many other ways I haven’t even noticed yet. The assurance and the support have pulled me through life. I am always so grateful for having The Smith Family as my backup. They’ve given that extra lift when I felt like I couldn’t do something. That in itself is priceless. It’s a wonderful program. I feel like it saves so many students.”

Cindy

Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship student



Strategic priority 5

Grow influence

We will grow our influence through effective advocacy.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Life-changing impact

“The Smith Family has had an immense impact on my schooling. I’ve been able to take part in many experiences that I couldn’t have.

I became involved in the *Learning for Life* program in Year 3. I don’t remember my family struggling because when it came to that kind of thing, we had The Smith Family support to buy uniforms and textbooks.

In primary school, I participated in the *student2student* reading program, which definitely improved my reading. I was also in the Learning Club which helped me with social interactions as well as my literacy and numeracy. Now the Tertiary Scholarship is helping me a lot. I used the first payment to buy a laptop and now I use it to pay for travel to uni. Without the support, I wouldn’t have thought about going to uni.



Without The Smith Family, my life would be completely different. I don’t even know where I would be. I wouldn’t be studying for one and I probably wouldn’t have gone through Year 12. The *Learning for Life* program motivated me to buckle down. That was the best thing, as well as hearing from my sponsors and participating in Smith Family events.

Thank you very much for giving me and other kids like me the opportunity to shine. The *Learning for Life* support is very impactful and life-changing.”

Jaidyn

Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship student

Advocating for a more equitable future for children and young people

Our advocacy contribution this year has been significant, with major policy reviews instituted by the Australian Government in the areas of early-years education, schools, tertiary education and philanthropy.

We made 16 public policy submissions, covering educational disadvantage, digital inclusion, careers and transitions support, data for purpose and matters relevant to the for-purpose sector. Our submissions were informed by our expertise in research and practice.

The Smith Family has been actively involved in the governmental reviews, making submissions to all four. The Smith Family CEO Doug Taylor was also on the Ministerial Reference Group for the National Schools Reform Agreement, and former CEO, Dr Lisa O'Brien AM, was Chair of the Expert Panel to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System. In addition to the submissions, The Smith Family has publicly advocated for reforms in a range of channels, including through opinion pieces in national media.

We also released four major research publications, made 33 external presentations and held a range of webinars to share our insights and help advance ideas on how to improve the lives of children and families experiencing disadvantage.

Researching better ways to support students

Over the past 12 months, our longitudinal research with *Learning for Life* students continued to contribute to the Australian educational evidence base. For example, through research made possible by Education Dashboard South Australia (EDSA), we strengthened our understanding of the extent to which mobility impacts the educational outcomes of students on the program.

We were also a partner on the Australian Research Council's *Advancing Digital Inclusion in Low income Australian Families* project, led by Professor Michael Dezuanni from Queensland University of Technology. A collaborative initiative involving four universities and five not-for-profit organisations, the project focused on how digital inclusion impacts children's home and school learning experiences, young people's transitions into work, and parenting.

The study involved extensive long-term research with families and community organisations in six communities across Australia. It produced a thorough evidence base on the main challenges affecting the digital inclusion of low-income families, and recommendations for assisting more families to achieve digital inclusion.

Pathways, Engagement and Transitions project

In 2023–24, we marked the final year of our initial *Pathways, Engagement and Transitions* (PET) research project, funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The research's aim was to better understand how young people experiencing disadvantage move through the final years of school and beyond, and how more young people could be supported to complete Year 12 or its equivalent and go on to positive post-school pathways.

Over three years, the PET project involved surveys and interviews with young people on our *Learning for Life* program who were in Year 10 or Year 12 in 2020. Thousands of young people participated in this nationally unique longitudinal research, providing vital insights on their educational and employment experiences. PET data shows, for example, that school attendance and achievement in Year 9, and access to career support during school, are stronger predictors of a young person's likelihood of completing Year 12 than demographic factors such as gender or indigeneity. This data can be used to provide more targeted and effective support for young people to complete Year 12.

We authored two PET publications with recommendations on how to better support young people experiencing disadvantage. These publications were distributed widely to diverse stakeholders interested in young people. They attracted significant media attention and were the focus of many briefings, including a well-attended webinar.

Given the significant value that PET has provided to date and the vastly changed educational, employment and social contexts facing young people post-COVID, we have decided to continue the project for another three years. Young people who were in Year 10 in 2020 and on the *Learning for Life* program will continue to be surveyed and interviewed, as will those who were in Year 10 and on the program in 2023. In early 2024, more than 6,100 students, including more than 1,100 First Nations young people, were surveyed, with an extraordinary 81.5% response rate.

We are incredibly grateful that so many young people have so generously shared their experiences and insights with us through PET.



IMPACT IN ACTION

Using data to strengthen our support of students and families

The Smith Family can now better support the students and families we work with, due to our faster access to educational data.

Since 2021, The Smith Family has partnered with the Department for Education in South Australia on a data exchange arrangement aimed at improving our support of school-aged children on *Learning for Life*. As a result, frontline team members now have real-time access to crucial educational data held by the department. This includes accessing school attendance, literacy, numeracy and behavioural data through the Education Dashboard South Australia (EDSA), a Power BI dashboard specifically built to meet the needs of our team members.

This year, two years after launching EDSA, we asked our South Australian team members to evaluate its usefulness in their work. More than 90% rated it four or five out of five.

Team members use EDSA to prioritise their support of students and families based on need. They also use it to better support students who are struggling with attendance, refer those struggling academically to learning programs, and provide additional support for students with behavioural challenges. In addition, it enables team members to acknowledge and encourage students and families when attendance and/or achievement improve.

Having access to the dashboard has also strengthened The Smith Family's partnerships with schools. It enables better collaboration to support students and families. As one team member commented, "Using EDSA daily has improved how I support *Learning for Life* students and families by giving me the information I need to make strategic calls and have face-to-face meetings. The dashboard provides me with up-to-date attendance data, which helps me identify students and families who may require assistance with attendance support and to address any concerns families may be experiencing."

After the successful pilot in South Australia, and strong support from *Learning for Life* parents and carers, The Smith Family has been working with other jurisdictions to establish similar arrangements. As a result, we were delighted to launch the Education Dashboard Tasmania (EDTAS) in May with the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People.

We also entered into data exchange agreements with the education departments in Western Australia and Queensland, and hope to have our team members accessing data through similar arrangements early in FY25.

Our sincere thanks to our *Learning for Life* parents and carers for supporting this initiative, and to the state education departments that are partnering with us to improve educational equity.



The Smith Family's Head of Research and Advocacy, Anne Hampshire (L), and National Manager, Research and Evaluation, Catherine O'Byrne (R), with David Engelhardt, Director, Measurement Strategy and Research, South Australian Department for Education. **Photo credit:** Hamish Appleby

Recognition for EDSA

We were delighted that EDSA won the 2024 Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Award for Best Use of Data for Community Impact. The dashboard was also showcased in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's report, *Australia's welfare: 2023 data insights*, as part of our ongoing advocacy around greater use of data to support improved student outcomes.

Changing the conversation about costs and impact

The Pay What It Takes (PWIT) initiative in Australia is a collaboration between the not-for-profit (NFP) sector and funders, advocating for full cost recovery across the work of NFP organisations. To sustain viability and ensure ongoing effectiveness, NFPs need sufficient funding to cover all expenses, including overhead costs.

As part of this movement, our Head of Fundraising, Lisa Allan, spearheaded the *Reframe Overheads* initiative to refocus the way NFPs talk about the need for, and the impact of these critical costs across their work.

The initiative underscores that overheads are necessary for building sustainable and effective organisations. It also highlights that using a percentage of overheads alone as a metric of impact is a rudimentary indicator of a NFP's effectiveness or impact.

Through the campaign, NFPs are being asked to play a role in better informing stakeholders so that they understand more clearly how change happens and how, by investing in overheads, NFPs are on a stronger footing to achieve ongoing impact.

By reframing the conversations around NFP overheads, changing funding practices, and concentrating on more accurately measuring outcomes and impact across the sector, NFPs can address society's most critical challenges in a more effective and transparent way. This in turn paves the way for more impactful philanthropy and also for transformative changes in Australia's for-purpose landscape.



Strategic foundations

Enabling deeper impact and broader reach

We are committed to maintaining strong foundations that will help young Australians build positive futures for themselves. By growing sustainable funding, empowering our people, being cyber secure and investing in digital, technology and data, along with enhancing our governance, risk management and compliance, we are creating a highly capable, effective and efficient organisation.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support during the hard times



Dennis, *Learning for Life* grandparent

“My granddaughter Saphirra is 14 years old. She’s in Year 9, and she’s a wonderful person. I’ve been caring for her off and on for about 10 years.

When she was in Year 1, a wonderful woman at the primary school asked me if I would like Saphirra to have a scholarship with The Smith Family. At that time, I was on a disability pension. We always ate well but it was difficult to pay for things.

The Smith Family has been incredibly helpful for me. I don’t have much in the bank,

but every year we go to the school and we buy new uniforms because of The Smith Family.

Saphirra did Learning Club in primary school. [The tutors] did a fantastic job. It really helped her get through those early stages.

I would love Saphirra to go to university and it’s a dream of hers as well. Without the sponsorship, there would be a fair deficit in the things that we could do.

Thank you to The Smith Family. It really does make a difference.”

Dennis,
Learning for Life grandfather

Support and opportunities make a difference

“I did the *SmArts* art program in the school holidays. I wanted to do it because I’ve been doing art ever since I was a little kid. It’s my therapy. I went to the Logan Griffith University campus to paint a mural for them. I enjoyed it because I could get out of the house and enjoy life.

I get quite a bit out of The Smith Family. The money helps with school things, so I really appreciate that. I know it helps us financially whenever we don’t have the extra money.

It also just really helps me overall.”

Saphirra
Learning for Life student

Strategic priority 6

Grow sustainable funding

We partner with generous Australian individuals and businesses to deliver significant and lasting social impact.

Our supporters' ongoing generosity provides us with resources to manage our organisation efficiently and to support the delivery of better outcomes for students and their families. Strategic investments in further strengthening our essential capabilities, ensure we can continue to raise the vital funds needed to help even more young Australians experiencing disadvantage overcome the barriers they face.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Optus is powering student potential



Ilesha, Optus Donate Your Data® participant

Digital skills and reliable internet access are essentials in education. Without these, some young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are being left behind.

To help address the digital divide, one of the most powerful tools The Smith Family has is the Donate Your Data® initiative through our longstanding and much-valued partnership with Optus.

Since 2018, 37,957 students and their families in the *Learning for Life* program have received a free prepaid service, with up to 60GB of data, calls and text through the Optus Donate Your Data® initiative.

In 2023–24, Optus extended participation eligibility to include the families and carers of students supported by *Learning for Life*.

There were 33,397 active Donate Your Data® participants still receiving free mobile internet connectivity over the course of the year.

The initiative is making a real impact, with *Learning for Life* students like Ilesha no longer having to worry about running out of data each month.

“Before joining Donate Your Data®, I had limited access to the internet,” says Ilesha. “Now I can go anywhere and use that data and not have to wait for the next month to come.”

The Smith Family is grateful to Optus for its continued support over 14 years and we are thrilled to have extended our partnership for another three years, through to 2027.

Individual supporters

We appreciate all our supporters who share our vision of a world where every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to create a better future for themselves.

Attracting new supporters – especially child sponsors and donors who give funds monthly – is crucial for ensuring reliable future funds and our long-term sustainability. This year, we were delighted to welcome almost 6,000 new sponsors, over 4,000 monthly donors, and 13,700 new cash donors.

Investing in fundraising initiatives such as our sponsorship drives and cash appeals continues to deliver strong engagement and returns. This in turn enables us to provide high-quality support and impactful learning programs to the young Australians we help, and for the duration of their educational journey.

This year, for every \$1 we invested in raising funds for our work, \$3.32 was invested in our programs helping young Australians overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

Sponsors

Our sponsors support children in our *Learning for Life* program to have what they need for their education. This is especially crucial in the current economic climate, as many families continue to struggle to afford their children's school essentials.

We had 67,282 active sponsors supporting 67,165 students at the end of the year. We highly appreciate the commitment and care of all our sponsors, with 90.2% choosing to continue their sponsorship support this year. We are extremely grateful for their ongoing help.

Donors

As in previous years, our donors were incredibly generous, giving at record levels despite persistent cost-of-living pressures. Donations to our Winter Appeal, for example, surpassed last year's record result. In response to the significant challenges faced by families we work with, donors gave even more generously.

Despite the economic climate, our cash appeals exceeded our target. We raised \$14.8 million, with another \$13.4 million received through additional fundraising activities and from our monthly donors – our Children's Champions.

We were extremely grateful to receive all donations, and we thank donors for their continued support. With their help, we are able to expand our reach and support the education of even more young people.



Darci, *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship student

Bequests

We were fortunate to receive bequests from several generous supporters who left a gift in their Will to support children facing disadvantage. This year, bequestors' altruism saw us receive \$10.3 million from 133 individual estates. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to their families, and our heartfelt thanks for these gifts, which will continue to transform children's lives for generations to come.

We would like to also thank the growing number of supporters who have informed us that in the future they plan to leave a similar meaningful legacy to support our work.

Growth in digital giving

In 2023–24, \$18.5 million in annualised income was donated through The Smith Family website. This included donations from more than 18,000 first-time donors and sponsors.

This year, as part of our commitment to continuous improvement to benefit our supporters, we invested in digital improvements to our website. A key aim was to develop a more effective and user-friendly website design. In consultation with our supporters, we worked on improving our website's structure and functioning to enhance how donors and sponsors navigate our offering online and find crucial information about our work. The project also allowed us to bring our website design in line with our recent brand refresh project.

Philanthropy

We acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of our major supporters and corporate partners whose philanthropic support allows us to impact more lives than ever before.

We value our conversations with our partners and donors in fostering a shared understanding of our business model and identifying the best ways they can support the true costs of delivering our important services to the Australian community.

Through this close collaboration, we are able to be a more effective and efficient organisation, working to address not just the symptoms, but also the root causes of educational poverty. With their help, we can ensure our programs are evidence-based, of the highest quality and deliver maximum impact for the children and families we work with.

Major donors

We are extremely grateful to our major donors who share our commitment to creating a world where children and young people can achieve their potential.

Once again, The Smith Family's major donors demonstrated exceptional generosity through their leadership support for our core *Learning for Life* program. We also received high-impact gifts for our education support programs, including *Digital Learning Essentials*, *SmArts* and *Let's Read*, which help put children on the path to reaching their goals. In total, our major donors gifted nearly \$13 million to support our work.

The Children's Future Education Endowment

The Children's Future Education Endowment (CFEE) was established in 2016 to provide disbursements to support the education of children experiencing the impacts of poverty. Net earnings from the pooled investment of funds in the CFEE are used to provide students with *Learning for Life* scholarships.

This year, our generous supporters, including a number of new supporters, gifted \$2.9 million to the CFEE. As a result, its value rose to \$14.7 million as at 30 June 2024, up from \$11.2 million in June 2023.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our donors for their support of the CFEE. By making their gifts, they are establishing a lasting legacy for themselves and their families, and paving the way for a brighter future for *Learning for Life* students.

Corporate partnerships

The Smith Family is grateful to our 67 strategic partners for their generous support throughout 2023–24. Collectively, our corporate partners and workplace givers contributed more than \$14.7 million this year, helping us deliver better outcomes for students and secure our long-term sustainability.

We welcomed 13 new strategic partners including Angle Auto Finance, Bidfood Australia, Canon, CFC Foundation, EziBlank, Fletcher Building, HCF, Hungry Jack's, the Telstra Foundation, Transgrid and Williams Shoes.

Notably, the confirmation of a new partnership with Australia's largest not-for-profit health fund, HCF, has resulted in the company supporting 1,500 *Learning for Life* students. This collaboration is testament to our commitment to fostering partnerships built on shared values.

In a challenging economic climate, customers of our partners also generously supported cause-related marketing campaigns with Ampol, Asahi Lifestyle Beverages, the Greater Charitable Foundation, Officeworks and TK Maxx. We congratulate the Ampol Foundation and Ampol Foodary on the success of their third and highest retail fundraising campaign for The Smith Family, which raised \$447,000.

This year also saw long-term partner Colgate celebrate 32 years of support for The Smith Family. Colgate was our very first partner to invest in our *Learning for Life* program.

We also want to extend our deepest gratitude to those who support us through workplace giving, and our corporate volunteers who selflessly donated their time to support our work. This includes skilled volunteering, program delivery and support for other organisational needs.





Participants leave the startline of The Smith Family Challenge. The 100km adventure race raised over \$1.3 million for The Smith Family.

Trusts and foundations

We would like to thank the 170 trusts and foundations that donated \$5.8 million to support Australian children in 2023–24. We are also thankful for the life-changing support of trusts managed by our partners at Australian Communities Foundation, Equity Trustees, Perpetual, and the State Trustees Australia Foundation.

Our valued partnership with the Paul Ramsay Foundation has supported our *Pathways, Engagement and Transitions* (PET) research over three years. This research has helped us identify evidence-informed policy and programmatic recommendations to assist more young people experiencing disadvantage to complete Year 12 or equivalent and have positive post-school pathways.

Thanks to the generous support of a private donor and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, our *On PAR* pilot program is ongoing. This location-focused early intervention initiative provides intensive case management support to improve the educational outcomes of primary school students.

We are grateful to Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies for their unwavering support of the *Digital Learning Essentials* program, designed to help young Australians overcome digital inequality.

Events and community fundraising

Each year, thousands of people participate in community fundraising and events in support of The Smith Family, such as The Smith Family Challenge and The Dream Run. Their extraordinary efforts help empower young people in need to create better futures for themselves.

In 2023–24, over 5,500 supporters raised more than \$2.6 million through community fundraising and events. This includes more than 4,700 participants who took part in The Dream Run – a month-long fitness challenge – to raise over \$820,000, making 2024 the event's biggest year yet. A record 16 corporate partners also participated, collectively raising more than \$230,000. We gratefully acknowledge Junior Adventures Group, which raised almost \$72,000.

The 17th annual Smith Family Challenge took place at Sussex Inlet in New South Wales. Participants raised \$1.3 million, adding to the more than \$15 million raised since the event's inception. This year, we celebrated the extraordinary contribution of outgoing Smith Family Challenge Committee Chair, Tony Davis, who has led the event since 2016. Under his leadership, participants have raised a staggering \$10 million. We are delighted to welcome Ben Keeble, a longstanding race participant and committee member, who will commence as Committee Chair in 2025.

Thank you to our Patrons, Ambassadors and Champions

We would like to acknowledge the support of our Patrons, Their Excellencies, the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and VIEW Clubs of Australia Patron, Mrs Linda Hurley.

In the past year, we were also privileged to have the support of Ambassador Sarah Harris, Network 10 journalist and television presenter, and thank her for her ongoing amplification of our work in the media. Thanks also go to Brooke Boney, News and Entertainment presenter at Channel 9's Today Show, who recorded an inspirational career-focused video for students before her departure from Australia to study at Oxford University. We also thank Ambassador Dr Craig Challen SC OAM for fundraising, spreading our message, and actively supporting our work in 2023–24.

Pay What It Takes Charity Consortium

Recent Australian research shows that many non-profits lack essential full funding from donors for their critical capabilities. Resources produced by the Pay What It Takes consortium, led by our Head of Fundraising Lisa Allan, include in-depth research and a guide to offering strategies to help the sector communicate and engage with funders. Of particular focus is sharing how value is created through their support and the difference that funding overhead costs properly can make to a non-profit's effectiveness and sustainability.

Supporter data

Thanks to all our supporters for your commitment to our work this year.

194,903

individual supporters

67,282 + 127,621

sponsors of
Learning for Life
students

donors funding
Learning for Life
programs

248

partner organisations

67 + 170 + 11

corporate
partners

trusts and
foundations

tertiary
institution
partners

\$136.6 million

donated by individual supporters,
bequestors and our philanthropic
partners to assist children and
young people

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support so kids don't miss out



“We became involved with The Smith Family at a time when my husband and I were low-income earners. I had reduced my work hours to study to advance my career. Financially, it was difficult.

Our three kids had sport commitments, swimming, after-school activities and other school costs. Around that time COVID hit and we headed into remote learning. We needed to purchase all the school items to educate the kids from home, which was another expense.

After remote learning, my son, Shelby, was quite far behind. He did The Smith Family’s *Catch-Up Learning* program and was having tutoring twice a week.

The tutor helped him understand what was going on in the classroom and Shelby noticed he could do things he couldn’t do before.

Through The Smith Family, Shelby has a phone with Optus’ donated data.* He can communicate with his friends and hotspot to his Chromebook if he needs to. That’s been a massive thing he’s enjoyed.

The Smith Family sponsorship means we never have to worry about the kids’ school uniforms. We can pay for their swimming lessons and after-school activities knowing that their school fees and uniforms are paid for.

Without The Smith Family, our kids wouldn’t have had the resources they need for learning. Knowing that they will start the school year with uniform, shoes, school bags, lunchboxes and not feel left out compared to their peers, makes a big difference. It’s meant they’ve had the same experience as their peers.

Education is so important, so to have a stranger investing their time, energy and money into my kids’ future is lovely.”

Sandy,
Learning for Life parent

* Through the Optus Donate Your Data® initiative

Thank you

All our partners provide much-valued support. We are grateful for their commitment, expertise and contributions to our work.





KEO Charitable Foundation



KING & WOOD MALLESONS
金杜律师事务所



Maple-Brown Family Foundation

The Maria Vasas Foundation

Mark & Helen Johnson



McKnight Family Foundation



Mr & Mrs Barry and Elizabeth Frost OAM



The Orloff Family Charitable Trust



Phill Isaacs OAM



Ramses Foundation



Reuben Pelerman Benevolent Foundation

Rob Sturrock



Scott Williams Foundation

Six Jeffries Foundation



Suitters Foundation



VIEW Clubs of Australia

Established in 1960, Voice, Interests and Education of Women (VIEW) is a national women's organisation and support network. It brings together women in communities all over Australia to connect with others through social activities and networking events while supporting the education of young Australians experiencing disadvantage.

Today, VIEW exclusively supports The Smith Family and has more than 13,000 members in 268 clubs.

The Smith Family is grateful for this long-term and valued partnership with VIEW, and thanks all VIEW members for their ongoing and much-appreciated contributions.

Increasing Learning for Life sponsorships

VIEW Clubs is the largest community sponsor of students on The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program, sponsoring more than 1,760 students in 2024. This is a new milestone for VIEW.

VIEW members also volunteer their time in their communities, strengthening the impact of The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program for children and their families.

Making connections makes a difference

VIEW opened two new clubs this year: Whittlesea in Victoria in October 2023 and Lake Illawarra in New South Wales in May 2024. The presence of new clubs increases VIEW's ability to build networks in local communities and raise awareness of The Smith Family's work.



VIEW National Convention 2023

VIEW Clubs' 56th National Convention was held in Hobart, Tasmania. It was attended by Their Excellencies, the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of Australia, and Patron of VIEW Clubs of Australia, Mrs Hurley, who were warmly received.

Over three days, members heard from prominent Tasmanian speakers – including the Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, celebrating VIEW Clubs' unique achievements.

VIEW leadership and governance project

A national review of VIEW Geographic Boundaries was initiated to ensure the responsibilities of senior officers are more equitable, sustainable and attractive to future leaders. Recommendations will be made in 2025.

Increasing collaboration between The Smith Family and VIEW Clubs

Senior VIEW leaders in each state met with The Smith Family's leadership team to agree on guidelines for maintaining strong connections between the organisations and develop a greater understanding of working together in community.

VIEW members continue to engage via social media

VIEW's Facebook presence continues to grow, and currently it has 2,507 followers. Over half of all VIEW Clubs have their own Facebook page, profile or group, providing a way for members to connect and increase VIEW's profile in the community.

VIEW brand refresh

In 2024, VIEW refreshed its logo and marketing collateral to make its communications more contemporary and engaging, and to reflect VIEW as a welcoming, active and supportive group of women unified around a great cause.

Embracing a digitally enabled society

VIEW Clubs understand the importance of students having appropriate digitally enabled tools to complete their schoolwork. They have donated an incredible \$300,000 in support of The Smith Family's *Digital Learning Essentials* program.

13,264

VIEW Club members
in 268 clubs across
Australia



Strategic priority 7

Empower our people

We empower our people by optimising our organisational capabilities, culture and communication.

Our vision for our team members and volunteers is for them to thrive in a resilient, adaptive and contemporary workplace where they are enabled, feel empowered and have the skills and mindsets to deliver our organisation's purpose.

One of our major undertakings this year was the Culture Initiative. This initiative recognises the significance of our organisational culture in achieving our strategic goals and promoting a cohesive workplace.

We aim to put a more strategic emphasis on our culture and in collaboration with our team members, work towards further enhancing it to support the successful execution of our organisation's strategy.

Due to the significant and sustained organisational time, effort and investment involved in bringing about cultural change, we plan to manage this project in phases across the next two financial years.

Evolving our culture

For our Culture Initiative this year, we worked with partner Still North to define our ideal culture and develop a roadmap to bridge the gap between that and our current culture. Key steps included identifying our organisational strengths, validating results through focus groups and prioritising our culture goals. We created a draft roadmap, outlining the proposed work plan and detailing the crucial alignment of our culture with our strategy, brand guidelines, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Roadmap, and Employment Engagement Survey action plan.

Employee Engagement Survey

This year's Employee Engagement Survey yielded valuable insights into key areas where we can improve our team members' experiences and empower them in their roles. Like all workplaces, we face challenges such as managing workloads amidst ambitious targets, optimising our systems and processes, and enhancing organisation-wide communication. In our plans to address these, we aim to boost team member confidence and trust, increase motivation and skillsets, and ensure that all feel valued and supported in their roles. Using the data from the survey results, we developed a detailed action plan that includes strategies to better manage team member workloads and priorities, improve systems and processes at both organisational and functional levels, and increase engagement with our team regarding our strategy and outcomes. These will help create a more supportive, productive and efficient work environment for everyone.

Strengthen our employee value proposition

In 2023–2024, we introduced several new policies to reflect The Smith Family's commitment to supporting team members' diverse needs and promoting a positive workplace culture. The changes included introducing more parental leave, leave for inter-state relocation and gender affirmation, traditional/cultural observances special leave, and more paid days annually to cover domestic and family violence leave. Additionally, we have increased the travel allowance rate.

This year, we also developed our DEI Strategy and Roadmap for 2024–26. It outlines our commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful and equitable workplace. Key initiatives include developing DEI policies, increasing team member training and awareness, and establishing governance and oversight measures.

During the year, we introduced a new employee assistance program, *Sonder*, that will provide an improved range of wellbeing services to team members. In further developments in work health, safety and wellbeing, we designed a work health and safety consultation structure for implementation through committees in the states and territories and the National Office – all of which report to an organisation-wide committee chaired by the CEO.

We are committed to achieving gender equity and reducing the gender pay gap in our organisation. We are reporting our data to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency and informing our team members about our results. In the 2023–24 reporting period, our average gender pay gap was 18.53%, and the median was 15.43%, with men earning more than women.¹ This is a slight increase in the average gap compared to data reported for the previous year but a notable decrease in the median gap. Excluding data from male-dominated functions, for example IT, the average gap reduces to 12.55% and the median to 7.21%. To make inroads into addressing the areas we can control, we are focused on our recruitment and appointment practices, including ensuring we have gender-balanced shortlists for roles.

Reconciliation Action Plan

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we refreshed our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and volunteer strategies. This included reviewing our existing policies and procedures and gathering feedback and input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members and other key stakeholders.

¹ This gap is the percentage difference between the mean of all female salaries compared to the mean of all male salaries. The median is the comparison of the middle score for each.

Team member entitlements

The Smith Family is presently developing a new Enterprise Agreement (EA) to replace our Community Programs Agreement (2016). This Agreement covers approximately half of our employed team members. In March 2024, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Australian Services Union and paused EA negotiations while a key piece of structural work on position classification is worked on. This will strengthen the EA. This year, we also implemented changes to a range of policies and applied wage rate increases for team members covered by the EA.

Last year, we commenced a review of the entitlements received by our non-EA team members, covered by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (Award). With the support of an independent expert, we undertook a comprehensive investigation to examine the entitlements of current and former Award team members since 1 February 2017.

As a result, we are taking steps to ensure that all Award team members have received their applicable entitlements over time and, during the year, undertook necessary mitigations, including making remediation payments to affected current team members. We also established processes to ensure team members are fully and regularly informed about our review progress and could raise concerns through dedicated channels for resolution. We are presently finalising our review and remediation of any impacted former team members and aim to conclude this work by the end of 2024.

In 2024, 72% of our team members agreed that most of our systems and processes support them to get their work done effectively, compared with 61% in 2023.

Our People and Culture team

To support the smooth running and service for the people processes at The Smith Family, we continued to develop the structure of our Strategic Human Resources (HR) Partnering team and our People and Performance team.

This year, we appointed national managers and filled key internal positions to provide The Smith Family with expert advice and guidance around people management, HR business partnering, health, safety and wellbeing, and HR data and metrics. We also implemented tools to further enhance our ability to engage with and provide timely and practical support to the broader Smith Family team.

Investing in systems and processes

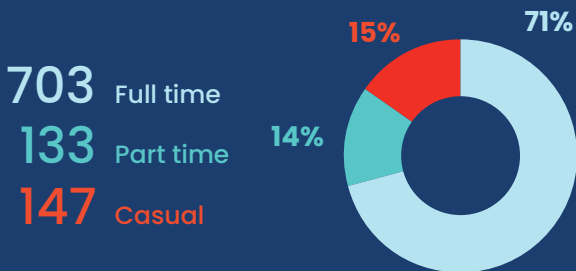
A top focus this year was continuing to improve key technology platforms, systems and processes that help make The Smith Family a more secure and sustainable organisation and one that attracts great people whose experiences here mean they wish to stay and continue delivering value to our organisation.

To improve processes, we reduced manual workloads by streamlining processes, standardising tasks, and introducing templates and automated documents. This has helped optimise the time our team members can spend delivering services to students, families and our supporters. We further empowered team members by implementing critical system upgrades, including migrating our finance systems to Microsoft Dynamics. Additionally, we made significant improvements to the technology supporting our website and digital infrastructure.

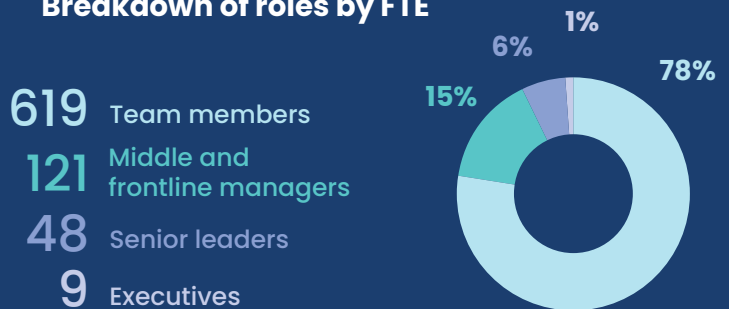
We continued progressing our Developing Change Capability program to improve our organisation’s ability to handle change and enhance our team members’ and volunteers’ experiences. We aim to ensure that the human aspect of change is considered in all our change efforts, improving our organisational readiness for change and reducing the risk of psychological hazards. To consistently track our progress, we included change management questions in our annual employee survey to establish metrics and help monitor our progress towards our goals.

Our team members

Employment status



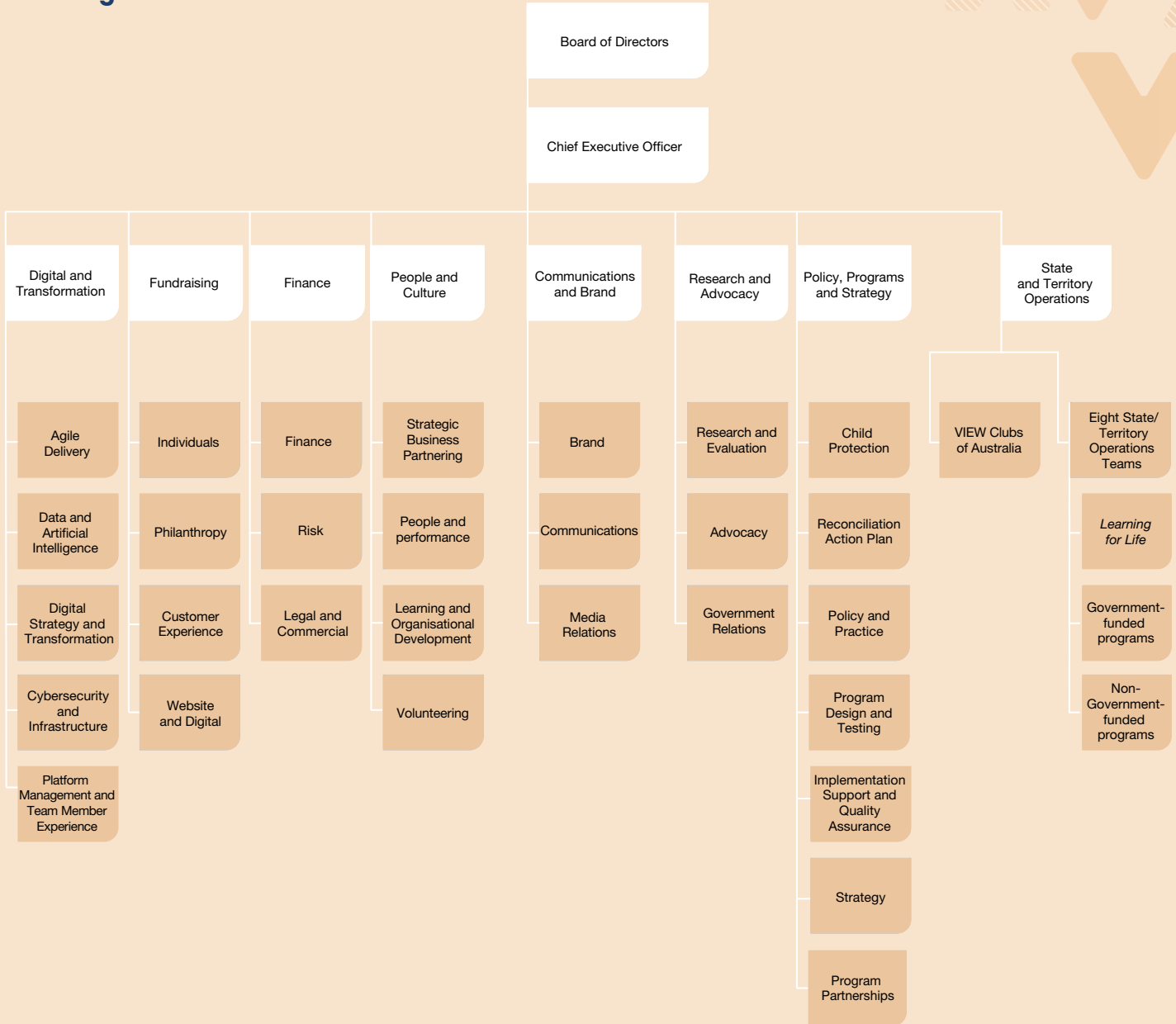
Breakdown of roles by FTE



983 Smith Family team members
or 797 full-time equivalents – excluding casuals

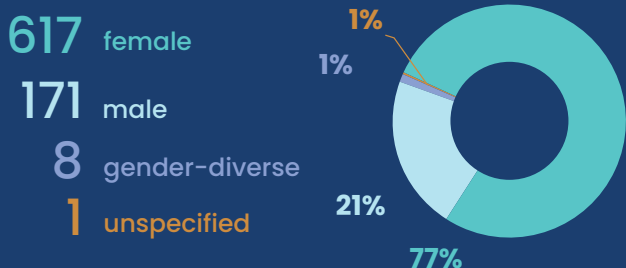
15.9% Voluntary employee turnover for 2023–24

Our organisational chart

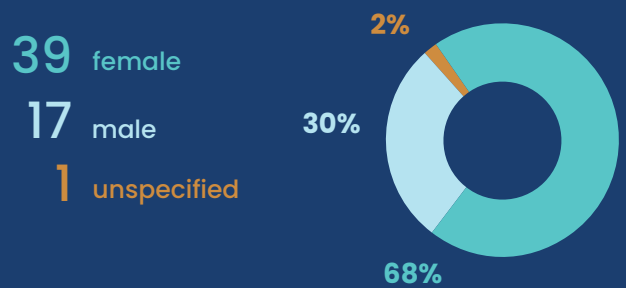


Gender composition

Whole organisation by FTE
(excluding Board of Directors)



Executive and senior leadership by FTE



Male Female Gender diverse Unspecified

All data correct as at 30 June 2024.

Volunteers

Without the generous donation of our volunteers' time and skills, our work would not have the scale and impact it does. We are grateful to the thousands of community and corporate volunteers who dedicate their time and support to further The Smith Family's purpose.

Volunteer participation

Volunteers have always been an integral part of The Smith Family's history and success. After the disruption of the COVID years, it was heartening to see the number of volunteer hours donated increase by 14% compared to the previous year, albeit with fewer individual volunteers donating more hours than last year.

Happily, 90% of all available roles were filled, with 43% of total roles filled by returning volunteers. This highlights the value of our ongoing focus on retaining existing support.

The total number of volunteers directly correlates to the number of available roles. This year, we saw available program and administration roles and associated volunteer participation continue to increase. Program role availability increased by 5%, with volunteers remaining keen to support student-facing roles.

In late 2023, we said goodbye to one of our longest-running volunteer engagement activities when our Toy and Book project switched from delivering packs to families that year, to instead, providing vouchers for families to purchase toys and books. The discontinuation of associated volunteer roles contributed to a 15% reduction in the number of one-day roles available compared to last year.

Recently, we introduced several new opportunities for corporate and community volunteers, including online student profile checking. This activity enables volunteers to support us remotely at a time that suits them. This year, volunteers spent 7,556 hours completing student profile checks.

Managing volunteer experience and engagement

To ensure The Smith Family has an effective approach to managing volunteers at scale, we employ a dedicated team that facilitates our volunteers' engagement in our work and ensures they have a positive experience with us. This team also helps protect our organisation from risk and ensures we comply with sector best practice standards and requirements.

This year we continued to equip team members with the tools, knowledge and resources to work effectively with volunteers for mutual benefit, and ensured they are appropriately prepared and resourced to engage volunteers successfully. We ran 11 workshops and training sessions for volunteer managers and provided training to volunteers themselves.

Acknowledging volunteers' critical role in helping keep our work secure, we collaborated with our technology and risk teams to roll out compliance training and cyber-security measures to volunteers.

A key part of our model is our Volunteer Coordination Unit. Its role is to register and screen all incoming and returning volunteers, match them to a suitable activity and assign them to local volunteer managers. This year, the unit fielded more than 3,000 expressions of interest and screened nearly 2,000 individual volunteers.

Recognising the importance of volunteer management is one of the 11 strategic objectives outlined in Volunteering Australia's *National Strategy for Volunteering*, introduced in 2023. The plan looks at key focus areas, including the volunteer's experience, the community and social impact of volunteering, and the conditions needed for volunteering to thrive. The main aim is to ensure that volunteering remains at the heart of Australian communities.

As a member of the support coalition for Volunteering Australia's *National Strategy for Volunteering*, we have publicly committed to support the implementation of the strategy's vision, aims and strategic objectives. During the year, our CEO was appointed Chair of the National Strategy for Volunteering Council, an independent body established to provide strategic oversight to the strategy's establishment and ongoing implementation.

Digitising our processes

In 2023, we completed the first phase of our major project to digitise our volunteering processes. This included improving how we process large numbers of volunteers through the recruitment and screening pipeline. Entering database information for a new volunteer applicant can now be completed in three minutes as part of a bulk upload of up to 200 applications, compared to 13 minutes per applicant previously.

Enhanced customer relationship management functionality, increased automation and a new customer ticketing system have resulted in less complicated and error-prone business processes. This continues to reduce organisational risk and improve volunteers' experiences. As a result, we achieved a 7% increase in volunteers' satisfaction with our registration process.

4,913

individual Smith Family volunteers filling 5,485 volunteer roles nationally (with some volunteers taking on more than one role)

123,547

hours of service donated by volunteers, equivalent to \$4.3 million

92%

of volunteers reported satisfaction with staff support provided

87%

of volunteers would speak positively to others about their volunteering experience with us

IMPACT IN ACTION

Virtual Volunteering offers a different way to give back

VIEW Club members, Margaret and Sandy, wanted to do something extra for The Smith Family. Joining The Smith Family's Virtual Volunteering team was an opportunity that suited their schedules, while also being rewarding.

Using a secure online system, Virtual Volunteers review *Learning for Life* student profiles for any child protection and privacy concerns.

Being able to volunteer online whenever suits them, from the comfort of their own homes, is appealing for Margaret and Sandy.

"I like the flexibility as I can choose when and where I do my work. It easily fits into my life. There are no constraints, and I can log in day and night," Margaret explains.

Sandy has been able to set up a routine that fits with the rest of her day. "I can have my morning coffee and do a half hour of volunteer work each day then move into the rest of my daily routine," she says.

As VIEW Club members, the pair understand how important educational support is for children experiencing disadvantage. Being part of the Virtual Volunteering team has deepened that understanding and their connection to The Smith Family.

Celebrating volunteering

Our annual National Volunteer Week campaign is an opportunity to publicly recognise and profile the volunteer effort that sustains and enables our work through various activities. This year, more than 300 team members and volunteers attended a national volunteering celebration, tuning in to hear from speakers, including our CEO, who volunteers as a mentor for a high school student participating in our online mentoring program, *iTrack*.

Understanding volunteers' shifting perspectives

To better understand the changing attitudes towards volunteering, we worked with the consultancy group Precise Value to research current and previous volunteers. This provided valuable insights into what volunteers seek in their experience and what they most appreciate about volunteering with us. It also confirmed the importance of highlighting the impact of their contributions to outcomes for *Learning for Life* students and families.



Margaret (left) and Sandy, VIEW members and Virtual Volunteer participants

"I am very proud to volunteer for The Smith Family. I feel like I am making a positive contribution to sponsored students. In this role, I have gained more insight into their lives. It is a very enjoyable experience," says Margaret.

Sandy agrees, adding that she has also improved her own digital skills. "I've gained valuable skills and experience by working in the digital virtual space. It's increased my understanding of how the digital world works. I also have a deep feeling of passing something positive forward to the next generation of children. It's a very rewarding activity."

Strategic priority 8

Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data

We are focused on building and developing our cyber resilience and our digital, technology and data capabilities so that we can achieve our goals.

Digital and data

In 2023–24, we completed the launch of our redesigned Digital and Transformation function. We continued to focus on enhancing our ability to deliver solutions that enable secure and positive digital experiences for our stakeholders and team members.

We also continued our journey towards enterprise agility, balancing speed and innovation with stability and sustainability. This approach enables a culture of achievement, empowerment and impact that helps us thrive in a fast-paced digital landscape.

Following our Ways of Working and Teaming Support initiative to improve agile digital delivery, we refined and improved our delivery processes, risk management and governance, to enhance how we manage the workflows of our discrete business streams. These efforts are aimed at ensuring strategic alignment and managing our capacity more effectively.

We advanced our strategies for digital and data security as part of our ongoing cyber resilience initiative. This year, to further reinforce the security of our data and systems, we launched pilots aimed at improving data labelling and data access methods. These measures will ensure that access to sensitive information continues to be closely monitored and controlled.

Policy and processes

We updated our data governance policies to clearly outline for our team members the minimum expectations and standards required. Adherence to these policies enables us to protect the integrity and security of our stakeholders' information.

Enhancing our essential information technology services resulted in our team members' overall service satisfaction score rising by 15 percentage points to reach 74% in 2024, compared with 59% last year.

Reducing risk

We implemented initiatives to reduce our risk exposure, including through our cyber resilience program. This included implementing additional programs in our customer relationship platform for improved security and program management efficiency. We also completed a refresh of devices, in line with our four-year replacement policy. This ensured that our team members have access to the modern tools they need to do their work.

We also implemented MS Defender for Office 365 and Exchange Online Protection for safer access to online content and electronic communications, procured a new security operations provider for enhanced monitoring, and completed penetration testing to check our systems for vulnerabilities.

Another key focus for the year was strengthening our disaster recovery plans and improving our email system, for additional reliability and ensuring compliance with industry standards.

Enhancing our stakeholders' experiences

During the year, we invested in various initiatives to continue improving the digital experience of our stakeholders, including students, families, supporters, volunteers and team members. These included improving the My Smith Family digital online portal, payment processing, and online expression of interest and registration forms, and continuously enhancing our dashboards.

We further optimised our customer relationship management system to establish a smoother and more efficient flow of data for our team members. We also automated team member onboarding and exit processes, replacing manual tasks with more efficient, repeatable procedures.

As part of our digitisation and transformation program, NextGen, we created a service blueprint (visual representation of our business processes) for delivering programs to students and identifying new transformation opportunities. We used this to co-design a digital tool for recording student attendance at our programs and conducted a pilot that showed the tool reduces manual effort and frees up time for team members to focus on important program implementation activity. The tool will be made available to all relevant team members in the coming year.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support to
achieve big

Emmanouela, *Learning for Life* student, Australian Olympic Gymnast, 2024

“Going to the Olympics was one of the best experiences in my life. Living with and walking next to the world’s best athletes was so surreal. The whole competition, the crowd, my team, the emotions, the whole arena ... I can’t put it into words how amazing it felt.

When I first moved to Australia from Greece, I was nervous and scared but I was excited to start a new life and meet new people. I didn’t know any English, but everyone at my school and my gymnastics club were really helpful.

To get to where I am has taken a lot of sacrifices for me and my family.

It was hard and we had to be very resilient to keep on going. My family, coaches, teammates, sponsors and everyone who supported me have made the process just a tiny bit easier.

Being a *Learning for Life* student has definitely helped a ton. At the start, buying school supplies wasn’t easy because we had to use our finances for food and rent. The *Learning for Life* program helped with getting my school supplies and uniforms.

The support from The Smith Family took a weight off my parents’ shoulders, with paying for my gymnastics, school fees and supplies.

I could focus on school, while my parents focused on trying to support my gymnastics career so I didn’t have to choose between gymnastics or school.

I want to thank my sponsor for helping not just me, but my parents. Without your support, I wouldn’t be here today achieving what I’ve achieved. All the support from The Smith Family, such as getting a laptop and internet access, has helped tons. I’m really grateful for it.”

Emmanouela
Learning for Life student, Australian Olympic Gymnast, 2024

Governance

We are transparent and accountable for how we manage our assets.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support to make goals and achieve them



Teiana, *Girls at the Centre* coach, with Toriarna, *Girls at the Centre* participant

“*Girls at the Centre* made a really big difference for me. I graduated Year 12 last year. Now I’m working in childcare and finishing my Certificate III. There’s no way I would have done that without *Girls at The Centre*.”

I was going through a lot out of school, and in school. I didn’t have friends that I could be around so I needed extra support. I wasn’t really going to class. I just wanted to drop out. In fact, I did drop out in Year 11, but then I came back in Year 12.

The [*Girls at the Centre*] coaches, Teiana and Amy, helped me a lot. I used to be really shy, but I’m outgoing now. They helped me through my assignments, they helped me get a job, and they made me feel comfortable. I could really open up to them.

Being with Teiana was the best thing about *Girls at The Centre*. I never used to think of goals or want to accomplish them, but Teiana helped me to do that. She helped me achieve a lot.

One of my best friends was in the program as well, and she’s achieved a lot too. Teiana helped us get a job together at a primary school as an SLSO [School Learning Support Officer].

I’m really grateful to *Girls at the Centre*. It has connected me to my culture, made me feel more comfortable and helped me to accomplish my goals. I’m proud to have finished Year 12 and to have a good job.

Girls at the Centre showed me that you can achieve anything that you want.”

Toriarna
Girls at the Centre participant, 2023

Board of Directors



Nicholas W. Moore AO
HonDBus BComm LLB FCA

Chairman and Non-executive Director since November 2019; Special Envoy for Southeast Asia for the Commonwealth Government; Chairman of The Centre for Independent

Studies, Willow Technology Corporation, Aldus Group and the National Catholic Education Commission; former Chairman of Screen Australia; former Chairman of the Markets Taskforce Expert Advisory Panel and the Financial Regulator Assessment Authority within the Department of Treasury; former Chairman of the Sydney Opera House and PCYC NSW; former Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Group; member (and former Chairman) of the UNSW Business School Advisory Council.



Greg Barnes
BComm CPA MBA GAICD

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Group Chief Financial Officer at Ampol Limited; former Chief Financial Officer at Coca-Cola Amatil, Nine Entertainment Co. and CSR Limited.



Christine Cawsey AM
FACEL BA DipEd MEd (Admin)

Non-executive Director since 2013; Principal of Rooty Hill High School since 1997, and a past President of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council; former board member

(2011–21) and now life member of GWS Giants AFL Club; member of Teachers' Mutual Bank Educational Advisory Panel.



S.A. (Tony) Davis

Non-executive Director since 2016; Founding Director and past Chairman of Quantum, a global leader in data analytics, technology and AI (now owned by Woolworths); Director of Seaford Foundation (family charity); Director and investor at

Greenbanks Tasmanian Whiskey; former Chairman and Director of peak marketing industry body ADMA; active investor and adviser to a range of early-stage, high-growth tech ventures, including Stream (media), ParaFlare (cyber security) and Prospecion (medtech).



Rosheen M. Garnon
BEc/LLB FCA CTA GAICD

Non-executive Director since 2019; Chair of the Board of Taxation; Non-executive Director of Venues New South Wales, Australian Rail Track Corporation and Resolution Life Australia; Member of the

Australian Council Board for Creative Australia; former senior partner with KPMG with more than 29 years' experience in professional services; member of Chief Executive Women.



Adrian J. Kloeden
MSc (Business Studies) BSc (Hons-Forestry) Hon. Doc FAICD

Non-executive Director since 2016; Chairman of Aquasure Pty Ltd; President of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Director

of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; extensive experience in senior management roles in a range of companies in Australia and overseas involved in agribusiness, manufacturing, distribution, retail, technology and transport.



Jeremy C.R. Maycock
BEng (Hons) FAICD FIPENZ

Non-executive Director since 2013; former Chairman of NSW Electricity Operations Group (Transgrid); former Chairman and Non-executive Director of AGL Energy Ltd, Port of Brisbane Pty

Ltd and Arrium Ltd; former Non-executive Director, Nuplex Ltd; former Managing Director and CEO of CSR Ltd (2007-10); Inaugural Chairman, Cement Australia Pty Ltd; former Member of the UNSW Business School Advisory Council.



Lisa Paul AO PSM
BA (Hons) FAICD FACEL FIPAA FAIM FANZSOG

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Chancellor, University of Canberra; Chair, Audit Committee of the Australian Academy of Science;

Director Australian American Leadership Dialogue; former Enterprise Professor at the University of Melbourne School of Government; Councillor of Bond University; Director of the Future Battery Industry Cooperative Research Centre; former Chief Executive (Secretary) of the Federal Department of Education in Australia (2004–16); director of several non-profit organisations.



Professor Peter J. Radoll
BInfoTech MInfoTech PhD

Non-executive Director since April 2019; Non-executive Director Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW; Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University; former Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Victoria University.



Mark Ryan
BArts (Journalism) MBA (Distinction) Adv Diploma of Neuroscience

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Manager, Strategic Communications at Queensland Rail; former executive-level roles at Mater Group, the Gold Coast

Suns AFL Club, and Tatts Group in roles across strategy, corporate affairs, organisational development, marketing and stakeholder engagement; Chairperson of Return Serve Inc.



Douglas D. Taylor
BMin BA (Hons) GradCertM GAICD

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director since 2021; former Deputy CEO, Uniting NSW & ACT; Chairperson, Warakirri College; Non-executive Director of the Wayside Chapel; member of the Centre for Social Impact Advisory Board.

Directors who retired in 2023–24

Our sincere thanks to our Directors who retired this year.



Dr Jeffrey A. Harmer AO
BA (Hons) DipEd PhD FAIM FIPAA FANZSOG



Mark G. Johnson
BComm FCA CPA FAICD

Council of Governing Members

The Council of Governing Members consults with the Board of Directors on The Smith Family's operations, ensuring they align with the objectives stated in our constitution.

The Council comprises the voting membership of the organisation and is responsible for electing Directors and adopting annual accounts.

In addition to the Directors, the current members of the Council are Arun Abey AM, Christine Bartlett, Barbara Cail AO, Emeritus Professor Ross Griffith, Dr Jeffrey Harmer AO (appointed 2023), Mark Johnson (appointed 2023), Professor John Kelly AM, Chris Leptos AO, Christine McLoughlin, Greg Ruddock, Doug Snedden, Rosa Storelli, Peter Stumbles, Paul Tobin, Richard Warburton AO, Ben Watkinson (appointed 2023) and Elizabeth Birch.

We thank all Council members for their support during the year. Thanks also to Jane Hemstrich and Ken Wiltshire AO, whose terms ended this year.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is The Smith Family's decision-making body, responsible for governance and oversight of management. Its role and responsibilities are governed by the constitution and a comprehensive Board charter. During 2023–24, the Board consisted of 10 honorary Non-executive Directors and the CEO, with each person offering a range of skills in addition to their board-level experience in various sectors.

Directors Dr Jeffrey Harmer AO and Mark Johnson retired from the Board in November 2023 after 11 and 12 years of service, respectively. Mark was also Chair of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, and the Endowment Fund Committee. We acknowledge Jeff's and Mark's dedication during their tenures and welcome them to the Council of Governing Members.

Nicholas Moore AO (Chairman), Rosheen Garnon and Professor Peter Radoll successfully stood for re-election as Directors at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

In addition, three new Directors were endorsed by the Council of Governing Members and appointed to the Board – Lisa Paul AO PSM, Greg Barnes and Mark Ryan.

The Smith Family's management conducts a comprehensive induction for new Directors to ensure they understand our organisation, strategy, and programs. This enables each Director to start contributing as soon as they are appointed.

Board committees

The functions of the Board's committees in 2023–24 are outlined below.

The Corporate Governance Committee supports the Board in developing governance principles; identifying candidates for membership of the Board, its committees and the Council of Governing Members; and reviewing The Smith Family's constitution.

The Endowment Fund Committee oversees the investment policy and mandate for the Children's Future Education Endowment.

Meetings held and meetings attended

| Director | Board of Directors | | Corporate Governance | | Finance, Audit & Risk | | People & Culture | | Endowment Fund | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Number held | Number attended | Number held | Number attended | Number held | Number attended | Number held | Number attended | Number held | Number attended |
| G. Barnes | 4 | 4 | | | 3 | 2 | | | | |
| C. Cawsey | 6 | 5 | | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| S.A. Davis | 6 | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| R.M. Garnon | 6 | 5 | | | 5 | 4 | | | 1 | 1 |
| J.A. Harmer | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| M.G. Johnson | 2 | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 |
| A.J. Kloeden | 6 | 6 | | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| J.C.R. Maycock | 6 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| N.W. Moore | 6 | 5 | | | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| L. Paul | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| P.J. Radoll | 6 | 6 | | | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| M. Ryan | 4 | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| D.D. Taylor | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 |

The Smith Family is a company limited by guarantee. Its ABN is 28 000 030 179.

As part of the registration requirements for all non-profit entities, the Australian Taxation Office confirmed in July 2005 that The Smith Family is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI). It is also an income tax-exempt charity and a deductible gift recipient.

The organisation enjoys certain other tax concessions and exemptions, relating to goods and services tax and fringe benefits tax, consistent with its status as a PBI.

The Smith Family is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), and as required by the following state and territory legislation and applicable regulations:

New South Wales

Registration number CFN 11049 – renewable in 2029 and subject to continued reporting to the ACNC

Queensland

Registration number CP 4163 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

South Australia

Registration number CA 778 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Tasmania

Registration number FIA-170 – ongoing subject to continued reporting to the ACNC

Victoria

Registration number FR 0010290 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Western Australia

Registration number CC 20352 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Australian Capital Territory

Registration number 19000133 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Over time, its earnings will provide a secure revenue stream to fund student scholarships and community work as part of our *Learning for Life* program. The Endowment Fund's overall funds under management at 30 June 2024 were 14.7 million.

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee's main responsibility is to assist the Board in its governance role of ensuring that the organisation operates prudently, effectively, efficiently, ethically and legally. The committee monitors the management of finances and investments to ensure they are effective, and funds are available to meet our operating requirements. It also monitors the effectiveness of risk management policies and procedures. This year, the committee maintained oversight of the activity underway in relation to the industrial instruments covering The Smith Family's team members. This included developing a new Enterprise Agreement and implementing an independent review and internal investigation into the entitlements received by team members covered by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010.

The People & Culture Committee provides advice on remuneration policies and practices. It also ensures The Smith Family complies with employment-related statutory and regulatory requirements, including those concerning workplace health and safety.

Advisory groups

The following groups advise the CEO and offer their expertise to senior management on issues and projects.

The Advisory Group on Issues Concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is chaired by John Rawnsley. Its members are Sarah Chaloner, Lenique George, Alara Hood, Jesse King, Rebecca McPhee, Professor Peter Radoll, Kieran Ryan and Wanda Wellington. Two of The Smith Family's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members, Karen Parter and Leanne Smith, also attend meetings. Dr Jeff Harmer AO stepped down from the Advisory Group at the start of September 2023 and Pauline Brown stepped down at the end of the financial year.

Doug Snedden chairs the Information Systems Advisory Group, which also includes David Ellis, Richard McLaren, Damon Rees, Anthony Robinson and Peter Spicer.

The Principals Advisory Group is chaired by The Smith Family Director Christine Cawsey. Its members are Angela Falkenberg, Caroline Fishpool, Donna McDonald, Andy Mison, David Samaha, Lee Sibir, Karen Snibson, Donna Westaway and Jarrod Williams. Malcolm Elliott and Andrew Pierpoint stepped down from the group during the year.

We sincerely thank all past and present members of our advisory groups for their service and support.

Governance standards

As a registered charity, The Smith Family is required to meet the ACNC Governance Standards. These high-level principles deal with how a registered charity should be governed, and we regularly review our compliance with them. Our policy framework ensures that our practices are aligned with:

- the ACNC Governance Standards, which include an obligation to act consistently with Australian laws,
- our contractual commitments, including those under key government funding arrangements,
- community expectations, and
- our values.

We operate in an environment of increasing focus on governance and risk. Throughout the year, we worked on strengthening our practices following the review of our Risk Management Framework, as described below.

Recognising and managing risk

The Smith Family's Enterprise Risk Management Framework guides us in identifying and managing risks at organisational, functional and program levels. Customisable risk management tools and systems support us to meet our operational and strategic objectives.

After an independent, external review of our Risk Management Framework in 2023, we established a steering committee to implement the recommendations. These included revising and updating our Risk Consequence Ratings, Risk Appetite Statement and risk criteria and assessment documents. To further strengthen our risk culture, we refreshed our Risk Management Policy and associated Key Document Framework, and improved volunteer training compliance and records management.

The Smith Family uses a specialist governance, risk and compliance platform to support identifying and managing risks, as well as for reporting child safeguarding concerns, hazards, incidents, data breaches and organisational complaints. This year, new processes were developed for reporting team member and volunteer injuries and lodging child protection compliance statements from our community partners. We also implemented contract management processes to support adherence with our procurement and delegation policies and to centralise our supplier records.

We also improved our records and information management practices and processes, in particular those relating to child safeguarding, by updating our Records Management Policy, developing new guidelines and implementing training for all team members. These actions will enable us to provide timely and accurate responses to queries received and are also consistent with our commitments as a child safeguarding organisation.

Child safeguarding

Ensuring the safety of children and young people is everyone's responsibility at The Smith Family. We have two key governance groups to oversee our child-safe initiatives. The National Child Safety Group, composed of Senior Managers, supports team members with child safety concerns, promotes regional child safety, and provides localised information. The Executive Child Protection Group leads the implementation of the Child Protection Framework across the organisation.

In 2024, the Australian Childhood Foundation reviewed our child safeguarding governance, confirming our strong governance structures and child safety culture, while also highlighting areas for improvement. These include refreshing our Child Protection Framework to increase alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and developing a more child-friendly complaints system. Implementation of the recommended improvements will take place in 2024–25.

Environmental sustainability

As part of our strategic commitments, The Smith Family has been reviewing opportunities to minimise our environmental impact and operate in a more environmentally sustainable way. As a service-based organisation, we do not have significant negative environmental impacts. However, to improve our operational environmental sustainability, we established an initiative and working group to set a baseline for our status and footprint. We collaborated with a third-party expert who reviewed our property footprint and travel arrangements and identified opportunities for improvement.

VIEW Clubs of Australia

This 13,000-strong national women's organisation supports the work of The Smith Family through fundraising, volunteering, raising awareness and advocating for Australian children experiencing disadvantage.

Its National leadership Team heads up the overall development of VIEW and administers policy. The two-year term of the National Executive appointed in January 2024 ends in December 2025. The National President is Elizabeth Birch. She is supported by two National Vice-Presidents, Sandra Jankovskis and Lorraine Thomson.

The National Councillors are Lyall Aldridge, Hazel Austin, Angela Carroll, Rosemary Coleman, Pam Evans, Dianne Fiddes, Jean Jennings, Jill Mason, Pat McRae, Bernie McSwain, Aletia Norman, Janet Park, Elizabeth Terry and Frances Turner.

Five-year financial summary

(Figures in \$'000s)

| | 2019–20 | 2020–21 | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Fundraising | | | | | |
| Donations and corporate support | 92,152 | 111,197 | 110,797 | 116,797 | 126,320 |
| Bequests | 9,090 | 9,773 | 9,462 | 10,925 | 10,286 |
| VIEW Clubs | 5,300 | 2,856 | 4,558 | 5,138 | 5,159 |
| Government funding | 35,814 | 26,366 | 19,824 | 18,886 | 21,066 |
| Children's Future Education Endowment | 1,169 | 836 | 835 | 667 | 2,886 |
| Commercial activities net contribution | 10,702 | 31 | 59 | 33 | 27 |
| Investment and other income | 1,831 | 3,297 | 312 | 4,922 | 6,881 |
| Total income¹ | 156,058 | 154,356 | 145,847 | 157,368 | 172,625 |

Expenditure

| | | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Policy and programs | (82,325) | (87,247) | (102,943) | (111,457) | (126,900) |
| Fundraising | (32,598) | (30,251) | (28,523) | (33,779) | (40,527) |
| Promotion | (4,358) | (4,852) | (6,359) | (7,036) | (6,855) |
| Administration | (2,314) | (2,507) | (3,424) | (4,844) | (5,607) |
| VIEW Clubs | (4,198) | (1,516) | (3,198) | (3,607) | (3,722) |
| Total expenditure¹ | (125,793) | (126,374) | (144,447) | (160,723) | (183,611) |
| Surplus/(Deficit) from continuing operations | 30,265 | 27,981 | 1,400 | (3,355) | (10,986) |

Other results and indices

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Commercial activities | | | | | |
| Sales and other revenue | 24,911 | 46 | 77 | 38 | 48 |
| Expenditure | (14,209) | (15) | (18) | (5) | (21) |
| Commercial activities net contribution | 10,702 | 31 | 59 | 33 | 27 |

¹ Total income is net of commercial activities' expenditure. Total expenditure excludes commercial activities. These are detailed in the above tables.

Volunteering

The Smith Family receives substantial contributions by way of pro bono support from corporate partners and volunteers, the value of which is not reflected in the financial statements. Volunteering contributions are valued based on the level of skill required by various volunteering positions.

| | 2019–20 | 2020–21 | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Volunteer hours | 214,000 | 152,596 | 116,038 | 108,341 | 123,547 |
| Value of volunteering contribution (\$m) | 6.3 | 4.7 | 3.7 | 3.4 | 4.3 |

Income

Since 2019–20, total income has grown by an average of 2.6% annually, rising from \$156.1 million to \$172.6 million in 2023–24, mainly driven by higher individual donations, philanthropic support and investment income.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Donations and corporate support | In 2019–20, income from individual donations and corporate support was \$92.2 million. By 2023–24, it had risen to \$126.3 million, representing an average annual growth of 8.2%. |
| Government funding | The Smith Family received \$35.8 million in government funding in 2019–20. In 2023–24, we received \$21.1 million. The peak of funding was in 2019–20. |
| Children's Future Education Endowment | In 2023–24, The Smith Family received \$2.9 million into its Children's Future Education Endowment. |

Expenditure

Overall expenditure has risen from \$125.8 million in 2019–20 to \$183.6 million in 2023–24, largely due to expansion of our community programs.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Policy and programs | In line with our revenue growth, we have invested to extend the reach and deepen the impact of our work. Investment in community programs increased on average by 11.4% annually, rising from \$82.3 million in 2019–20 to \$126.9 million in 2023–24. |
| Fundraising | In 2023–24, fundraising expenditure totalled \$40.5 million, representing an average annual growth of 5.6% since 2019–20. This growth rate is lower than the average annual growth of 10.7% in fundraising income over the same period. |
| Administration | Expenditure of \$5.6 million on administration support in 2023–24 represented 3.3% of total income, an increase from 3.1% in 2022–23. |

Other results and indices

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Commercial activities | The net surplus from commercial activities in 2023–24 was \$0.03 million. |
|-----------------------|---|

Volunteering

| | |
|--|--|
| Estimated value of volunteering contribution | The estimated value of the contribution of volunteers in 2023–24 was \$4.3 million compared to \$6.3 million in 2019–20. |
|--|--|

Fundraising performance

Investing for impact

Resources are essential for building the robust foundations we need to deliver on our purpose of helping young Australians overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

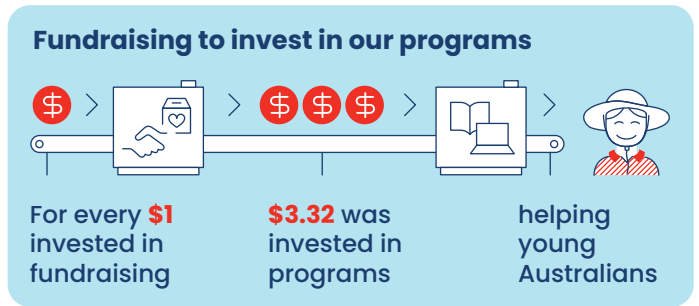
Our donors deserve transparency – more reporting on the effectiveness and outcomes of their donations, and tangible stories about how they are contributing to improving the lives of those we help. Our annual report strives to convey this information and demonstrate our accountability to supporters and partners who trust us to spend their donations wisely and well.

This year, we also focused on increasing transparency around our overhead costs. What we spend on our community programs is important; but we believe that demonstrating our efficiency should go beyond conventional fundraising-to-program spending ratios.

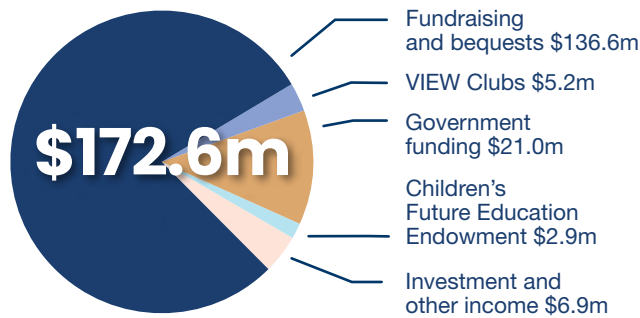
The overall efficacy of our organisation needs to be considered in its entirety, so that donors can understand how overhead costs contribute to areas such as developing and delivering quality programs, tracking and measuring outcomes and ensuring organisational sustainability.

At The Smith Family, investing in overhead costs enables us to create a capable and competent not-for-profit that supports students in over 780 schools each year, safeguards student and donor privacy, delivers \$3.32 back to the organisation to support program growth for every dollar invested in fundraising, and enhances the skills of our team members and volunteers to better assist our work.

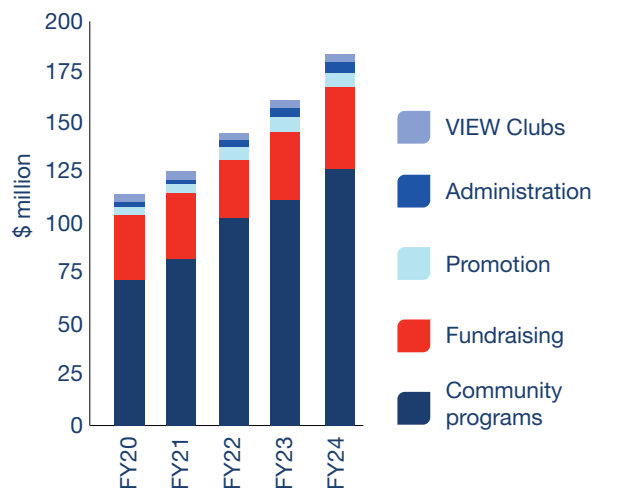
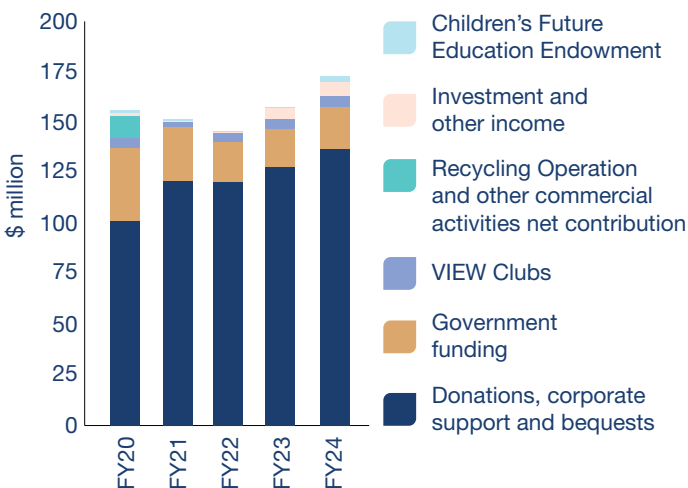
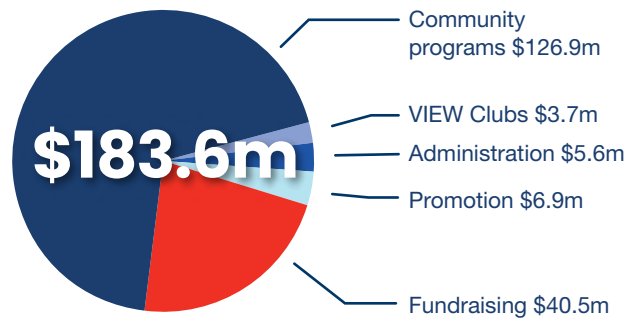
The connection to impact should be clear in every aspect. Ultimately, the most significant result of our investments is the impact our work generates, which serves as the best measure of our effectiveness. Investments we make in resources and activities positively impact our ability to achieve the longer-term program outcome measures we track and report – like student school attendance and advancement rates, and their post-school engagement in work or study.



Where we obtained our financial resources 2023–24



How we applied our financial resources 2023–24



In the five years to June 2024, 73% of donations from our supporters has been spent on our community programs, with 27% of our resources invested in vital activities that build our organisational sustainability and success.

2023–24 awards

2024 Australasian Reporting Awards – Gold Medal for our 2022–23 Annual Report; Winner, Best Annual Report Award in the Community and Welfare Industry Sector; Finalist, Top Five Annual Reports of the Year

2024 Australian Not-for-Profit Technology Awards – Winner, Best Use of Data for Community Impact, for the Education Dashboard South Australia

2023 Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) Awards for Excellence in Fundraising – NSW Finalist, Fundraising Impact Through Creativity (The Smith Family 2023 Winter Appeal)

2023 FIA Awards for Excellence in Fundraising – State High Commendation, Fundraising Team of the Year

2023 Australian Workplace Giving Awards – Winner, Best Payroll Giving Program; Highly Commended, Best Corporate and Charity Partnership (The Smith Family with Modern Star)

The Smith Family locations

General enquiries

GPO Box 5348
Sydney NSW 2001
Website: thesmithfamily.com.au
T Freecall: 1800 024 069
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

Volunteer Co-ordination Unit
T 1300 397 730

National office

Level 17, 2 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9085 7222 F 02 9085 7299
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra
Corner Launceston and Easty streets, Woden ACT 2606
T 02 6283 7600 F 02 6282 1725
Belconnen | Gungahlin | Murrumbidgee | Tuggeranong

New South Wales

Level 5, Westpoint Office Tower, 17 Patrick Street,
Blacktown NSW 2148
T 02 9895 1233 F 02 9633 9897
Albion Park | Auburn | Bathurst | Blue Haven | Chester Hill
| Claymore | Coffs Harbour | Cranebrook | Dapto | Dubbo |
Fairfield | Goulburn | Jesmond | Lithgow | Macquarie Fields |
Miller | Mount Druitt | Nowra | Orange | Raymond Terrace and
Karuah | Seven Hills | Shellharbour | Springfield | Tamworth
| Taree | Tarrawanna | Tuggerah Lakes | Wagga Wagga |
Warrawong | Wiley Park | Windale | Wyong

Northern Territory

Darwin
Level 1, 6 Pavonia Place, Nightcliff NT 0810
T 08 8985 6841
Darwin | Katherine | Palmerston

Queensland

Brisbane
Level 1, East Tower, 410 Ann Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
T 07 3115 6200 F 07 3337 6424
Brisbane | Caboolture | Cairns | Coomera | Gladstone | Inala
| Ipswich | Logan | Mackay | Maroochydore | North Brisbane |
Redlands | Rockhampton | Southport | Toowoomba | Townsville

South Australia

Adelaide
Level 2, 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide SA 5000
T 08 8224 1400
Christie Downs | Elizabeth Downs | Elizabeth Vale | Hackham |
Morphett Vale | Port Adelaide Enfield | Port Augusta |
Salisbury North | Smithfield Plains | Whyalla

Tasmania

Hobart
Suite 4, Level 3, Galleria Building, 31–35 Salamanca Place,
Battery Point Tas 7004
T 03 6223 2627
Brighton | Burnie/Wynyard | Glenorchy |
Northeastern Launceston

Victoria

Melbourne
Level 7, 50 Queen Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 9473 4300
Bairnsdale | Ballarat | Bendigo | Brimbank | Broadmeadows |
Collingwood | Dandenong | Epping | Frankston | Geelong |
Lakes Entrance | Morwell | Shepparton | Werribee

Western Australia

Perth
Level 1, 14–16 Victoria Avenue, Perth WA 6000
T 08 9265 5555
Armadale | Bunbury | Collie | Gosnells | Kwinana | Midland |
Mirrabooka | Rockingham

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