

Deepening impact

Enabling
lasting change



We partner with children and families so they can change their future

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.

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. We support families from their children's pre-school years until they finish their education.

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
- 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 strategy

Ambition	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.			
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> participants to improve student outcomes including through programs, enabled by data.				
		Leverage digital and partners	Leverage a greater range of partnerships to deliver 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	
	Be a child safe organisation		Strive for reconciliation and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples		Embrace diversity and inclusion		Improve our environmental sustainability

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

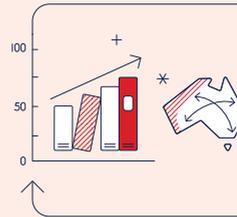
A long history of supporting the education of Australian children and our strong and trusted brand

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

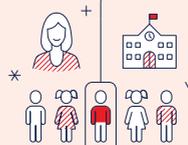


Evaluation and measurement: Contribution to overall evidence base and adjusting our course for impact

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 >

2023–24 progress >



Improved outcomes for children and young people



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



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



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



Advocacy submissions



55
advocacy products >

16 policy submissions
4 publications

+ **33** external presentations
+ **2** webinars



Strong community partnerships



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



Strong financial stewardship



\$136.6 million donated by individual supporters, bequestors and our philanthropic partners to assist children and young people



Benefits to team members and volunteers



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



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

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

Our progress

220,627 participants

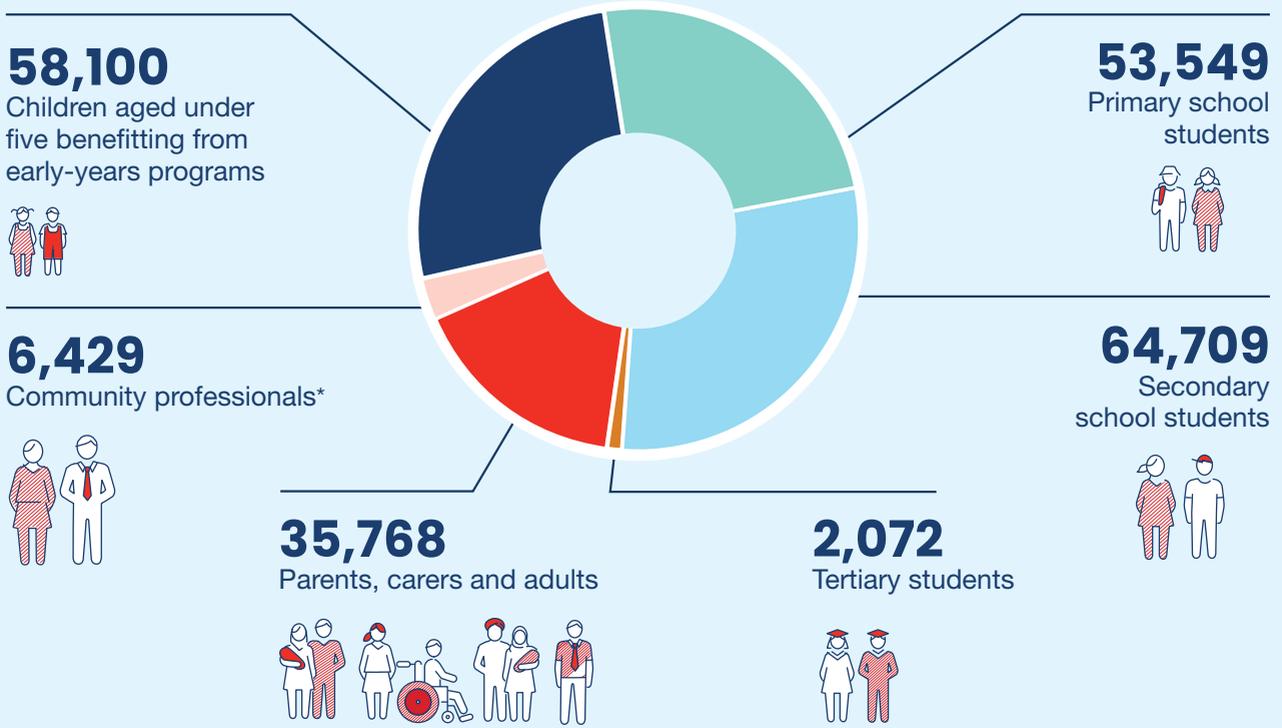
The Smith Family reached 220,627 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals in 2023–24, up 10.5% on the previous year.

178,430

children and young people participated in our programs

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

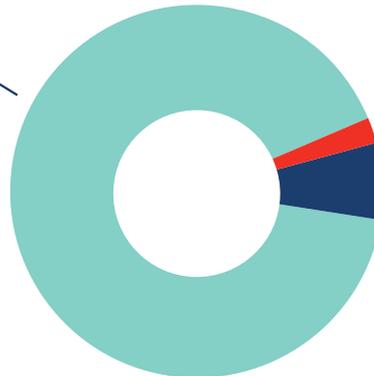
sponsors and donors

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

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,
79.2% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

64%

of *Learning for Life* students **in Year 10 in 2020, advanced to Year 12 by 2023.**

Longer-Term Results

Short-Term Results

Program Results

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.

3. Tertiary Completion Rate

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

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.

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

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

iTrack

80%

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

Improved knowledge and understanding of study options and career paths

Work Inspiration

79%

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

Improved knowledge and understanding of financial management

Saver Plus

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.

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



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

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).

58,100

children aged under five participating in early-years programs

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

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*.

53,549

primary years students
participating in programs

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

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

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

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

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

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%) last year.

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.

16,924

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

1 Productivity Commission 2023, Closing the Gap Repository.

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

Support to make goals and achieve them



Teiana, *Girls at the Centre* coach (L), 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

Creating a better future



Learning for Life student Cooper with his mother, Amanda

“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

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.

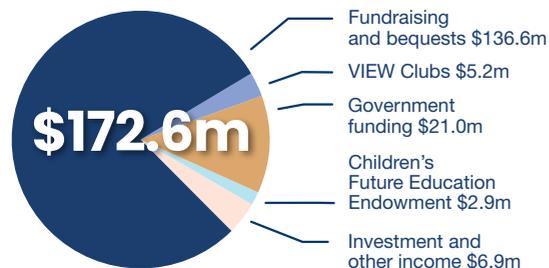
At The Smith Family, investing in overhead costs enables us to create a capable and competent not-for-profit that supports students in over 780 schools each year, safeguards student and donor privacy, delivers \$3.32 back to the organisation to support program growth for every dollar invested in fundraising,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

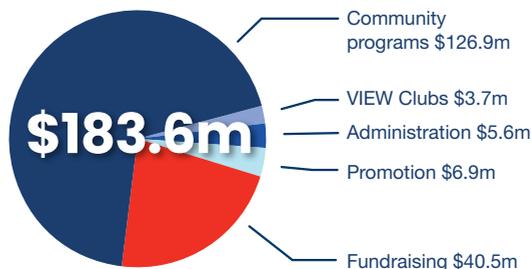
Fundraising to invest in our programs

For every **\$1** invested in fundraising > **\$3.32** was invested in programs > Helping young Australians

Where we obtained our financial resources 2023–24



How we applied our financial resources 2023–24



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

Support so kids don't miss out



Sandy with her son Shelby

“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

CASE STUDY

Opening young minds



Paoli Smith offices in Victoria, where Year 10 student Alvy explored a career in design through the Growing Careers Project.

The Growing Careers Project is an initiative designed to broaden students' career perspectives through hands-on experiences and mentorship from professionals across diverse industries. Events like *Speed Mentoring* give students direct insights into various professions, helping them explore new career paths and connect with industry experts.

As part of the project, Year 10 student Alvy joined a *Speed Mentoring* session designed to expose students to various career paths through brief, impactful conversations with industry professionals. The event, attended by 160 students, involved rotating small groups who spent 10 minutes with each mentor. This format allowed students a firsthand glimpse into professions they might not have previously considered.

Alice from Paoli Smith, a design agency in Victoria, volunteered her time to discuss careers in design. Motivated by her own high school experience, where she felt steered away from creative industries, Alice wanted to inspire students to consider careers that blend creativity and technology. When she introduced herself as a web designer, Alvy's curiosity was piqued,

especially given her initial interest in architecture. Seeing Alice's work opened Alvy's eyes to the potential of design, particularly in creating websites, logos, and billboards.

"I saw her work and thought, maybe this could be my area of strength," Alvy reflected. Encouraged, Alvy inquired about work experience opportunities with Paoli Smith, and Alice agreed, inviting her to spend a week at the agency.

During her time at Paoli Smith, Alvy immersed herself in various roles within the studio, discovering not only a passion for design but also new interpersonal skills. "I realised that I'm capable of socialising and talking to people," Alvy shared. The experience helped her reimagine her future beyond architecture and toward graphic design, where her interests in art and technology intersect.

Through the Growing Careers Project, students like Alvy are expanding their career possibilities, finding meaningful pathways that align with their strengths and aspirations.

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

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