



Y Queensland Community Impact Report

—
2023—2024

Y QUEENSLAND
Y-CARE (SOUTH EAST QLD) INC



Y QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

Table of Contents

Y Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and operate.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and recognise their continuing connection to land, community and culture.



The Y Reflect R.A.P Artwork
by Artist Chad Briggs



| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Our Guiding Principles..... | 4 |
| Message From The CEO..... | 6 |
| Message From The President..... | 8 |
| Our Impact | 10 |
| Y Schools..... | 12 |
| Schools' Breakfast Program..... | 14 |
| Cancer Survivor Program..... | 16 |
| Affordable Housing..... | 18 |
| Community Centres..... | 20 |
| Outside School Hours Care..... | 22 |
| Queensland Youth Parliament..... | 24 |
| Staff and Volunteers..... | 26 |
| Camping..... | 28 |
| Op Shops..... | 29 |
| Hotel..... | 30 |
| Safeguarding Children..... | 31 |
| Donors and Supporters..... | 32 |



KEY

This Y Community Impact Report is an interactive PDF document.



Clickable Element



Case Study



Link to video

Y QUEENSLAND

Our Guiding Principles

Our Strategic Framework

Belief

We believe in the power of inspired young people

Mission

To empower children, young people and communities Australia-wide to build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive world, where every person can thrive in body, mind and spirit

Vision

Create healthy, connected and thriving communities

Strategy Statement

Our Y will achieve this vision through: developing community hubs that respond to the needs of the local community; providing real opportunities for all people to grow in body, mind and spirit: creating social enterprises that support the organisation's financial viability and mission; empowering young people; developing a safe, resilient, unbreakable organisation

Our Four Pillars

At the 2022 AGM, all Associations committed to align their own strategy with the four pillars and report annually on their progress via the Community Impact Reporting process.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Human Services, Health Services, Risk, Food

Y Queensland believes that every person should have the means to grow and thrive in body, mind and spirit while taking care of their individual and collective wellbeing.

MEANINGFUL WORK

Education, Commerce, Finance, Logistics, Technology, Construction

Y Queensland believes that all young people deserve the right to learn, engage in flexible dignified and meaningful work and build sustainable livelihoods.

A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

Agriculture, Engineering, Ecology, Tourism, Utilities

Y Queensland believes that we should all commit and take action for the protection and regeneration of our planet, preparing for a just transition to a world where humans live in full harmony with nature.

A JUST WORLD

Law, Public Services, Policy, Communications

Y Queensland believes in the power of young people and communities to promote and advance justice, peace, equity and human rights for all.





MESSAGE FROM THE Chief Executive Officer

As we reflect on the past year, I want to start by extending a heartfelt thank you to our incredible staff and dedicated volunteers. Your unwavering commitment and passion truly inspires me every day. It's a joy to work alongside such talented individuals who share a common goal of making a positive impact in our communities.

I'm excited to share some highlights from our organisation, which has experienced remarkable success in the last financial year:

Y Schools Queensland

In our schools, we have not only expanded our reach but have also seen a significant increase in student engagement. Some key achievements include:

- We strengthened academic rigor through the implementation of PAT - a nationally consistent data tool, leading to improved teaching and learning based on individual student needs.
- We proudly launched the new Redlands Junior campus, extending our impact and facilities.
- Our Multicultural Day was enhanced, and we introduced an Art Showcase event to celebrate our students' creativity.

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

In the RAP space, we successfully closed off the Reflect RAP document in consultation with First Nations cultural advisors and have defined appropriate systems and resources to track and measure our progress against our RAP commitments. Our commitment to the First Nations community remains strong.

OSHC

Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services have grown, allowing us to support more families than ever before. We have delivered an excellent retention rate for our current services whilst growing our community engagement and providing students with wonderful educational opportunities in the before/after school care programs and during vacation care school programs.

Housing

Our incredible team continuously support our tenants to sustain tenancies and provide safe and inclusive housing. We have also delivered impactful community development programs, including health and well-being support to residents fostering a strong sense of community and enhancing their quality of life.

Camping

We are transforming young lives, with over 13,000 children annually experiencing life-changing adventures, gaining essential skills, boosting confidence and resilience through our camp programs. These camps are supported by a dedicated team who are always working to provide enhanced outdoor educational offerings.

Hotel and Old Petrie Town (OPT)

Our hospitality teams have again done an impressive job this past year. Our dedicated team at the hotel are passionate about providing exceptional accommodation and function services. Similarly, the team at OPT actively support local communities and have worked under some tough market circumstances to provide a range of events for the local community and our tenants.

Op Shops

We celebrated the new opening of our store at Strathpine this past year. These professionally run Shops provide important access to valuable yet well priced goods and are only made possible by our dedicated staff and an army of volunteers.

A special thanks to our Volunteers – in all our services. Thank you for all that you do!

Fitness and Recreation

In fitness and recreation, we were just shy of 1 million participations this year, showing the impact we have on the wellbeing of the community. We are so excited to now be in the Stanthorpe community allowing us to extend the programs we have been providing the Warwick community since 2014.

We've also supported 122 cancer survivors through the Cancer Survivor Program. This is such important work and our goal is to continue to extend its reach.

School Breakfast Program

We have grown our School Breakfast program! This work is critically important – ensuring students start their day with a healthy breakfast and setting them up for a successful school day ready to learn. With the help of our philanthropic partners, the Clem Jones Foundation, Club Southside, Compare the Markets – our new corporate partner, Government, Volunteers and other important community groups, we are now providing over 100,000 breakfasts every month. This growth has also demanded we expand our fleet of trucks and so this year we purchased a new truck to ensure smooth deliveries to the schools we serve.

Property Developments

This year has been bustling with building projects and renovations. We acquired a 2,024 sqm site at 16-18 Todds Road, Lawnton, with plans to develop a 70-unit affordable housing complex. Additionally, we successfully secured funding from the State Government for an affordable housing complex for women over 55 at risk of homelessness, at our Mango Hill site. This development will complement our existing services at the site which include an Op Shop, Gymnastics Club, School and Community Centre. We completed our new school campus at Redlands and completed our long-awaited renovations to the kitchen at Camp Warrawee.

Advocacy and Research

Y Queensland joined a coalition of sixteen major NFPs to lobby for increased funding for essential social services and longer contract terms for community services. We are thrilled to have successfully lobbied with our partners for the construction of 10 Youth Foyers across Queensland, providing stable housing for young people aged 16 to 25. We hope that one of the new Foyers will be built at Mango Hill.

The Research team have completed several research projects and developed valuable reports to help guide our programs and continue to improve our service

offerings. This work extends to partnerships with QUT and UQ, supporting our school breakfast program and Cancer Survivor Programs respectively.

Engagement Events

Our inaugural Cancer Survivors Program Lunch in October was a wonderful success, with around 50 guests attending. We look forward to building on these relationships and securing program sponsorships to help grow the reach of the program in the future.

Additionally, our annual Old Boys Lunch for members and former staff, reminded us of the strong foundation built by these dedicated individuals over the years. The lunch is a reminder of our values and our legacy and is always a truly inspiring time shared with wonderful people.

Y Queensland Board

A special thanks is owed to the Y Queensland Board who dedicate many volunteer hours to make Y Queensland the strong and Impactful Organisation that it is today. Like all our staff and volunteers, they care deeply about our Organisation and dedicate their time and talent providing Strategic and Governance guidance to the Leadership team.

Shared Services

I also want to highlight the Shared Services teams of Finance, IT, People and Culture, Risk and Compliance, Property Services and the Partnerships, Brand and Marketing teams, thank you for all you have done over this past year. We have focussed a lot on new systems and processes and each team has achieved significant goals and provided us with the foundations to do the great work our Organisation does.

A special thanks to each of these teams who are providing a greater and stronger bedrock for our operational teams to build and grow, expanding our reach to impact more communities. Thank you.

A big thanks to the small but mighty team who brought together all the wonderful content, stories and research in this Impact Report - Nomxolisi Malope-Rwodzi (Research & Evaluation Manager), AJ Chinchkhede (Social Media & Content Coordinator) and Anna Coles (Executive Lead, Engagement & Partnerships).

As we look ahead, I am filled with optimism and gratitude. Thank you all for your hard work, creativity, and dedication to our mission. Together, we have and will make a profound difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Thank you,



Chief Executive Officer
Y Queensland



Y Queensland Board of Directors and Y-Care (South East QLD) Inc. Management Committee

MESSAGE FROM THE President of the Board

Dear Friends,
As I reflect on the past year, I feel great pride for the incredible outcomes achieved by the dedicated staff and volunteers of Y Queensland. Your commitment to our mission has had a profound impact on the communities we serve, and it is a privilege to share some of our highlights.

Our **Y Community Housing Outcomes Report** stands as a testament to our success. The on-site support provided by our staff has fostered a deeper understanding of our tenants' needs, enabling us to deliver personalised assistance. This dedication has led to a remarkable 97% satisfaction rating among tenants. It's inspiring to see that 35% of our tenants have made Y Queensland their home since the opening of our housing complexes, with 90% reporting they feel safe in their units. Moreover, 86% of tenants feel more connected to their community, and 77% have been able to access essential health services when needed. These numbers reflect the meaningful connections we are building every day.

Our **Community Centres** have also seen significant growth in response to the evolving needs of the communities we serve. We've expanded our outreach services, providing vital support such as employment services, Centrelink assistance, and access to Legal and NDIS resources. The increased demand for food and clothing, social networking, and mental health support is a reminder of the important role we play in our neighbourhoods.

I am particularly proud of our **Cancer Survivor Program**, which engaged 122 participants ranging in age from 25 to 83. Many of these individuals continue to foster the friendships they formed during the program, embracing wellness together as active members of our Y Fitness Centres. Our collaboration with **The University of Queensland** on a research project to co-design a training package for community-based fitness professionals is another exciting initiative. This project aims to support autistic young people in accessing sports and exercise programs, highlighting our commitment to inclusivity.

Additionally, the **Queensland Youth Parliament Program** empowered 89 young people this year, providing them with invaluable civic education and leadership skills. Witnessing their growth and engagement confirms the hope we have for the future.

Lastly, our **School Breakfast Program** has flourished, growing from approximately 180 schools to over 400! This growth is possible thanks to the generous support of organisations like The Clem Jones Foundation, Foodbank, and the Departments of Education and Communities. Together, we are ensuring that our children start their days with the nourishment they need to thrive.

As I conclude, I want to extend my gratitude to all the staff, volunteers, and supporters of Y Queensland. Your unwavering dedication ensures that we can continue creating thriving, healthy, and connected communities. Together, we are making a real difference, and I am excited to see what the future holds.

Warm regards,
Heather Allan
President of the Board
Y Queensland



Heather Allan
President



Toolah Olsen
Vice President



Ian Smyllie
Vice President



Ross Mason
Board Member



Cath Parker
Board Member



Andrew Campbell
Invited Director



Tom Stephenson
Treasurer



Daniel Patava
Board Member



Leanne Geppert
Board Member



Amelia Shaw
Board Member



Richard Edwards OAM
Board Member

The Board and Management Committee of the Y give their time and expertise freely and generously to help us become a sustainable organisation that has a positive impact on communities across South East Queensland.

OUR IMPACT 2023—2024



YOUTH PROGRAMS

Y Schools Queensland

Y Schools provide effective pathways to employment through the delivery of Wellbeing, Academic, Vocational education and training. These three elements underpin the work that Y Schools Queensland delivers to its students.

In 2023, there were **854 students enrolled** across the **11 school campuses** over the course of the year. The School's average **attendance rate for the year was 66%**.

Students participated in **1,791 VET programs and activities**. 75% of these exposures were among students from the Senior Campuses.

The number of students who obtained a Certificate I to IV qualification increased by 18% from 2022 to 2023.



I got into a health nursing course with the help of my VET teacher and it's going to really help me.

Employment

30% of our students were employed in 2023 across all campuses. Senior campuses had higher employment rates (~32%-37.5%).

12% of our students gained new employment this year, while 18% maintained their jobs. Students attributed their ability to stay employed to the support provided by the VET teams.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT SCHOOL THIS YEAR?

My favourite thing is probably how invested all of the teachers are with students and how well everyone is treated.

enland
- Zane (Y Schools QLD)



Cert II in Engineering is extremely important to me as I'm learning how to weld and the experience being an engineer is unique and I enjoy the work a lot.



9,113,035

meals have been provided since commencement in 2006

15%

increase in meals provided over the past 12 months

33%

increase from 2022/23 financial year to 2023/24

39%

average of enrolled students at the schools we support with breakfast program

28,500+

students engage on any one day for the breakfast program

101,000+

students' engagements of breakfast on any one day our program runs at schools

4 days

on average a week schools run our program

309

schools are registered to receive support and or have received support by the end of June 2024



SCHOOL BREAKFASTS School Breakfast Program

Case Study

Region: Central Queensland.

School Type: Co-Educational State Primary and Secondary School.

Number of Students Supported: Approximately 85% of students enrolled

This school is in a small community of under 1,000 people, located about 40 kilometers from the nearest town. Remoteness is a risk factor correlated with food with barriers to food security in remote locations include fragile supply chains, absence of commercial markets, inconsistent funding, lack of community input, long transport distances and related costs, higher food prices, and seasonal isolation.

Families struggling and those experiencing food insecurity reported a specific need to provide food relief to students travelling by bus from the local Indigenous community.

"Kids from the local Indigenous community would pick up food at the local shop before catching the bus. Over the last couple of years business hours have changed and the shop is not open early in the morning. Some of the kids rush to catch the bus and don't have time before they leave for school. The school needed to step up and supply additional food for those kids"

This school uses school funds to purchase food supplies from a local store. The funds are then reimbursed back to the school by the YMCA School Breakfast Program. Through this process, the school has been able to provide a breakfast program five days per week and expand its emergency lunch program to a more substantial program five days per week.

Breakfast and emergency lunches are made available to all students and their families, feeding approximately 80-90% of primary and secondary students enrolled each week. The breakfast program is held at the tuckshop, and breakfast club staff prepare sandwiches and fruit for students accessing the lunch program that is held in the staff room for easy access to staff and students.

Positive Changes Since Receiving Additional Support Increased School Connectedness

The staff responsible for running food relief programs at this school have found them beneficial, reporting the programs provide opportunity to strengthen student relationships with staff. A school representative described the breakfast program as an open table where nobody needs to feel embarrassed. She noted parents and families dropping their kids off come to the tuck-shop where the breakfast club is held, to yarn with the staff.

We have built strong relationships with the students. They are keen to come to the staff room to have a chat, and that's how we give them lunch. In the previous year, only a few students would do it. The kids feel supported, like someone cares.

Prior to the breakfast program, not many students were accessing the emergency lunches as the students who really needed the support felt embarrassed and ashamed to tell staff they had no lunch. Since being able to access funding from Y Queensland, the school has been able to change the provision of emergency lunches to a more consistent lunch program run 5 days a week and feed more students.

"This year most of our Year 7 students have come from another school, where their previous school provided breakfast, morning tea and lunch. These students and families are used to having a food relief service, so it's been an easier transition to the school for those new students."





HEALTH & WELLBEING

Cancer Survivor Program

Y Queensland's Cancer Survivor program is a free 12-week physical activity and support program designed for individuals living with or who have overcome cancer. The program is conducted in small classes with six to 12 participants across four locations: Bowen Hills, Victoria Park, Warwick, and Jamboree Heights Y Queensland Fitness Centres.

The program takes place in a safe exercise environment, allowing cancer survivors to improve their health and well-being and, in addition to focusing on physical activity, the program emphasises the importance of building social connections among participants and fostering friendships with others with similar health experiences.

86%

of participants increased their lower body strength during the program.

Lower body strength is needed for various day to day tasks and to reduce the chances of falling.

95%

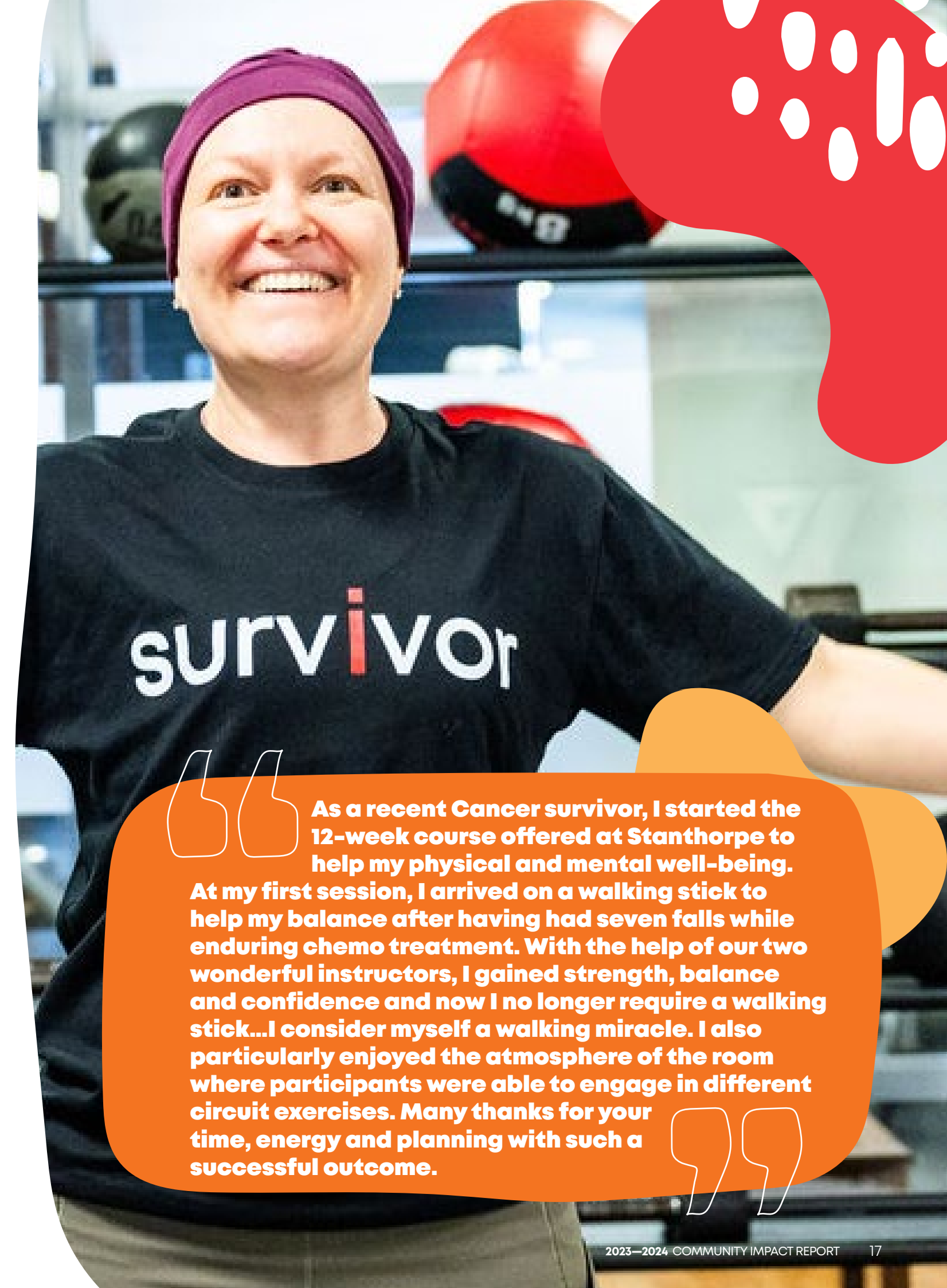
of participants experienced growth in their upper body strength by the end of the program.

Upper body strength enables lifting and carrying to support daily activities.

100%

of participants improved their aerobic endurance by the end of the program.

Aerobic endurance is a person's ability to exercise at moderate intensity for extended periods of time.



As a recent Cancer survivor, I started the 12-week course offered at Stanthorpe to help my physical and mental well-being.

At my first session, I arrived on a walking stick to help my balance after having had seven falls while enduring chemo treatment. With the help of our two wonderful instructors, I gained strength, balance and confidence and now I no longer require a walking stick...I consider myself a walking miracle. I also particularly enjoyed the atmosphere of the room where participants were able to engage in different circuit exercises. Many thanks for your time, energy and planning with such a successful outcome.





Dolly's Story

Age: 71, Nowell B Taylor House

Dolly has been residing in a one-bedroom unit at Nowell B Taylor House for nearly eight years. She feels profoundly safe and grateful for her home, particularly given her financial constraints on an aged pension. She appreciates the stability and security provided by Y Queensland, which she believes she would struggle to afford elsewhere.

She highlighted that living in this complex gives her a strong sense of safety, a fundamental improvement from her previous living situation. Before moving here, she lived with her son in a duplex in Nerang until financial difficulties and health concerns prompted their move. She found it challenging to cope with rising rent and a sleepwalking condition, which made a single-story unit more desirable.

When asked about the future, Dolly expressed no intention of moving, citing her current residence's stability and economic practicality. She felt fortunate to have secured her unit quickly through government housing and considered herself lucky compared to other applicants.

HOUSING Affordable Housing

77%
of all tenants reported having more stability since living at Y Queensland.

97%
of the tenants reported satisfaction with their units

94%
of the tenants considered their Y Housing unit their home

127
long-term community housing units across three properties

Y Queensland runs an Affordable Housing program with 127 long-term community housing units across three properties in Nerang on the Gold Coast (Nowell B Taylor House and Melville Place) and Slacks Creek (Edward's Place) in Brisbane. The program supports people who are at risk of or have experienced long-term, recurring homelessness and face a range of complex challenges.

Y Queensland's Affordable Housing model follows a **housing-first** approach, prioritising safe and permanent housing. If requested and/or required, Y Queensland then works with tenants to address issues that have contributed to their homelessness through referrals to services like drug and alcohol counselling or mental health support.

Y Community Housing also follows a **trauma-aware** practice that recognises and responds to trauma and supports a person's work towards empowerment by promoting safety, trustworthiness, choice, accommodating vulnerabilities, and appreciation for diversity

Housing Outcomes

Almost all (94%) of the tenants who participated in the annual evaluation considered their Y Housing unit their home, and almost all (97%) were satisfied with their units.

Most tenants said their Y units were everything to them, and many highlighted the safety and stability elements. Others described it as *"somewhere for me that is safe," "a roof over my head, feeling safe and having friends,"* and *"being able to lock my door. Being able to be myself. It's 'my special place'," "security and happiness, stability and much more,"* and *"everything to me."*

Other tenants highlighted that Y Queensland is their home because it houses everything they own.

Stability

77% of all tenants reported having more stability since living at Y Queensland.

"...Well, my stepmother, who had a lot of money, used to say things to me, like, where do you want to live now? ...and, um, I used to say, well, somewhere stable. I'm in...I'm in somewhere stable. So, I have everything I need. I have everything here from, you know, latest appliances to, um, everything cookware, um, you know, so I, I, I don't want for a thing, really." (Female, 73, Nowell B Taylor House)

Unit satisfaction

97% of the tenants reported satisfaction with their units, and 77% of the tenants were satisfied with the living conditions. Tenants mentioned how conveniently located each of the complexes is to public transport and local services like supermarkets. Those without cars particularly appreciated this. Other comments from tenants about what their Y complexes included:

Y Housing tenants have been engaged in various activities, including bowling, swimming, bingo, knitting, karaoke, BBQs, Yoga, live music, women's and rehab groups, and the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre. These activities help them stay connected with each other and their broader community. This year, 86% of the tenants reported feeling more connected to other people since living at Y Queensland.

Affordable Housing for Women over 50

In December 2023, we received notification from the Queensland Government – Housing Investment Fund that we were successful in securing \$17.69m in capital funding to construct a 47 apartment affordable housing complex at our site in Mango Hill.

The complex is to support the fastest growing cohort of homelessness in Queensland – women over 50 years. The site is well positioned in terms of employment opportunities, medical services, public transport options and retail. There are also tremendous synergies with other Y Queensland services onsite. The project is all about providing a safe, supportive community where residents can thrive.

Our Y is extremely grateful for the support from the Department of Housing and the Housing Investment Fund. Construction is forecast to commence in early 2025 for completion in early 2026.



Everything. I have nothing without this place. I'm very grateful to the YMCA. I would be out on the streets without this place.

- FEMALE, 68
NOWELL B TAYLOR HOUSE

Beautiful new apartment, nice gardens. Affordable. Staff are excellent and friendly.

- MALE, 48
EDWARD'S PLACE

Thank you for the opportunity to live here.

- MALE, 66
NOWELL B TAYLOR HOUSE



COMMUNITY CENTRES Springfield Lakes

Twelve months ago in Springfield Lakes, a community bustling with young families, a significant issue emerged: a noticeable lack of activities and social groups tailored for seniors. As grandparents moved closer to their families, many older residents found themselves increasingly isolated, struggling with mobility challenges and a diminishing sense of community. Recognizing the urgent need for support and engagement, we initiated weekly garden club, exercise class and craft club sessions.

The primary focus of the programs were seniors aged 60 and above residing in Springfield Lakes. Many of these individuals reported feelings of isolation and a decline in physical health, exacerbated by the absence of social and recreational activities. By creating a supportive environment, we sought to improve their physical fitness and social connectedness.

In response to the community's needs, we launched the Gentle Exercise program after receiving a grant from COTA (Council on the Aging). The program, led by instructor Bec, featured carefully curated exercises designed to improve mobility, strength, and overall fitness for seniors. Our objectives were twofold:

ENHANCE PHYSICAL HEALTH

To improve participants' physical abilities, helping reduce pain and increase mobility through gentle, tailored exercises.

FOSTER SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

To create a space where seniors could bond and support one another, alleviating feelings of isolation.

We also launch a monthly arts and crafts sessions, empowering seniors with new skills and knowledge and the outcomes of these initiatives have been profound. Seniors in Springfield Lakes now enjoy a revitalized sense of community, filled with opportunities for connection and growth. Participants frequently share their



gratitude for the program, highlighting how it has not only improved their physical health but also enriched their lives through new friendships and a supportive network.

As we look to the future, our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where seniors can thrive remains unwavering.

BRIGHTDAZE All-Ages Music Festival

BRIGHTDAZE was hosted at Y Queensland's Springfield Central Community Centre on Saturday, 8 July 2023 in partnership with Ipswich City Council and SPARK Ipswich. Bringing some of the best Australian artists to the City of Ipswich, the program took over Y Queensland's Springfield Central Community Centre Sports Hall, Community Spaces, and Outside Carpark for a unique all-ages festival experience.

BRIGHTDAZE was attended by more than 180 young people. The program was also supported by various community services including Y Queensland, headspace Ipswich, Kambu Health, Y2Tribe, Lighthouse Springfield, and Mark Davidson Consulting; all of whom contributed interactive community stalls, general event support, roaming youth engagement and community check-ins on the day.

Artists on the day included internationally acclaimed artist, Allday, in addition to DJ Kritty, GLVES, Hope D, Neesha Alexander, Paulina, Scalymoth and REKON DJ's. The program also featured DJ workshop sessions, sensory spaces, First Nations cultural workshops, and food stalls.



CHILDCARE **Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)**

Before School Care

The Before School Care Program is designed to provide a supportive and engaging environment for children before the start of the school day. This offering includes a variety of fun activities tailored to stimulate the children's creativity, social skills, and physical well-being. Alongside these activities, a nutritious breakfast is provided to ensure that every child starts their day with the energy needed for learning and growth.

After School Care

The After-School Care program is the largest offering within OSHC. It encompasses an array of games and physical activities designed to promote physical health, teamwork and personal development. Recognising the importance of academic support, the program also includes a dedicated homework club, where children can complete their school assignments with assistance as needed, fostering an environment of learning and academic excellence. Additionally, the program provides a nutritious afternoon tea, ensuring children receive the essential nutrients needed to maintain their energy levels and focus.

Vacation Care

The Vacation Care program is a dynamic offering that enriches children's holidays through a blend of incursions and excursions. Designed to engage and inspire, this program takes children on educational and entertaining outings, while also bringing specialized activities and guests into the school environment. These experiences not only provide fun and learning outside the regular school curriculum but also foster social connections and personal growth. The Vacation Care program ensures that children enjoy their holidays in a safe, stimulating environment.

Mission Achievement

Community Impact and Support

Y Queensland's OSHC program plays a pivotal role in our mission to nurture young individuals holistically in body, mind and spirit. By providing comprehensive child care that goes beyond basic needs to inspire and educate, we empower children and young people to reach their full potential. This support extends to families, enabling parents and guardians to pursue employment and education, thus strengthening community resilience and enhancing overall quality of life. Our dedication to both individual growth and community well-being reflects a commitment to effecting positive, sustainable change.

Health and Wellness

OSHC programs are instrumental in promoting health and wellness among children and young people. By integrating activities that encourage physical exercise, nutrition education, and mental health awareness, we support Y Queensland's mission for healthy living. These initiatives aim to establish foundational healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Ensuring that OSHC programs are accessible to every child, regardless of ability or background, is key to advancing Y Queensland's mission of building inclusive communities. This commitment to accessibility and diversity underscores our belief that all children should have the opportunity to benefit from our program, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.

Leadership and Personal Development

At the heart of Y Queensland's mission is the development of leadership skills and personal growth in young people. OSHC programs contribute to this goal by offering leadership opportunities and focusing on the cultivation of soft skills like teamwork, communication and problem-solving. These initiatives equip young individuals to become engaged, responsible community members, ready to make a positive impact.





Case study

EMILY SEE KEE – Youth Member for Cook

“Emily is one of the bubbliest, most enthusiastic Youth Members I have ever mentored; or at least, that’s what I discovered almost a month into the program.

A 15-year-old Youth Member from the Torres Strait Islands, Emily appeared at first to that she preferred to be the one in the group who did not do the talking. However, you quickly had to learn to ask open-ended questions if you wanted to elicit more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response from her. Once she began to open up, I realised how motivated she was to learn what she could from the program. Emily threw herself into Youth Bill throughout the year, never failing to ask for help and even requesting extra check-ins to help her understand Youth Bill writing.

Gradually gaining confidence to speak up in the Portfolio, she quickly became a wealth of knowledge about regional issues. When it came to speaking at Parliament House, I found that while Emily was nervous, she was so determined to advocate for her community, that it overrode her initial fears. She spoke proudly in the Chamber on numerous occasions and even jumped for an impromptu speech on one occasion. Her efforts during Sitting Week earned her the Mind, Body, Spirit Award for her willingness to embrace the program and have a go.

Living in the Torres Strait, Emily had to face considerably more obstacles whilst trying to stay involved throughout the year. Often only being able to Zoom in through a phone call, she struggled with internet issues and had the added responsibility of following up on missed meeting content regularly. She also had to fly solo for the first time on back-to-back flights in order to attend the residential camps. Despite the difficulties she faced, Emily never complained about her situation or used it as an excuse to miss meetings. She attended every meeting, even for a few minutes to say hello, and never failed to present her sections of the Youth Bill on time.

Emily is someone I have been extremely fortunate to have as a Youth Member. Her vibrant enthusiasm throughout the year created a supportive environment within the portfolio, encouraging everyone to develop into close friends. Her eagerness to learn also fuelled my support for the group allowing me to develop exponentially as a mentor over the year. Emily ultimately supported everyone around her with her positivity and encouraged the portfolio to be the best it could be.”

- Madison Hilker, Rural Communities, Transport and Main Roads, Communities and Housing Mentor

We asked participants if their career goals and aspirations have changed.
 Approximately half (48%) of the participants completed the program wishing to pursue a career in public service, policy reform, law, advocacy, community development and Parliament. While another 52% discovered that they want to pursue careers in other fields unrelated to their experience at QYP such as Neuropsychology and Medicine.

57%
 The majority of participants were female.

43%
 26 participants were culturally diverse.

28%
 17 participants were people of colour.

10%
 Six participants had a recorded disability.

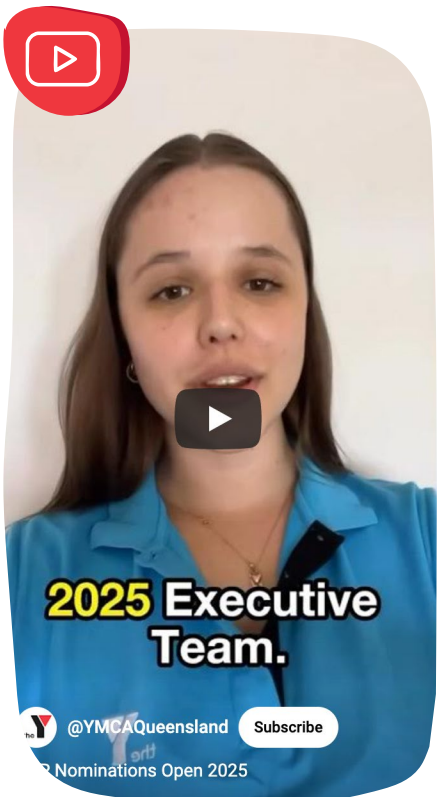
40%
 24 participants were from regional Queensland and one was of first nations origin.

YOUTH PROGRAMS Queensland Youth Parliament (QYP)

QYP is a comprehensive civic education and leadership program for young people aged 15– 25 years. It is based on three key principles: parliamentary education, personal development, and community engagement. The mission of QYP is to educate and empower young people from across Queensland to bring about positive social change. Eighty-nine young people completed the Y Queensland Youth Parliament Program in 2023.

The 2023 program saw this commitment to strong stakeholder relationships and community engagement continue. This year, over 600 community engagement activities were recorded. **86 out of 93 Youth Members were able to meet their MP**, an increase from 77 in 2022. 20 Youth Members were also provided with the opportunity to shadow their MP and see the work that they do as representatives of the community.

In total, there were 219 meetings that occurred with community representatives and Members of Parliament alone. This is in addition to 177 community consultation events organised by Youth Members and the QYP Executive with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Federal MPs, academics, Queensland Department Staff and community organisations.



STAFF People of the Y

Top left video
NAIDOC WEEK – Issy, QYP

Top right video
R U OK Day – Michael, Fitness

Base left video
NAIDOC WEEK – Kait, QYP

Base middle video
PRIDE WEEK – Soro, Y Schools

Base right video
PRIDE WEEK – Izzi, Marketing



STAFF Volunteers

Power Couple: Damien and Vicki's Dedication Lights Up Y Queensland Springfield Lakes Community Centre

In the heart of Springfield Lakes, a dynamic duo has been quietly but profoundly shaping the fabric of their community. Damien and Vicki, a husband and wife team, have become the cornerstone of Y Queensland Springfield Lakes Community Centre, dedicating their time, skills, and boundless passion to uplift those around them. Their journey began after Vicki attended a social craft group, Vicki was so inspired by the sense of camaraderie and purpose that she eagerly offered to lend a hand in running the group. Her warmth and enthusiasm quickly endeared her to both participants and staff alike. Recognizing Vicki's dedication and potential, the center seized the opportunity to harness her talents even further. In February 2023, when a temporary administrative position became available, Vicki seamlessly transitioned into the role, bringing her organizational prowess and unwavering commitment to the forefront.

Not to be outdone, Damien soon followed suit, joining the ranks of volunteers in July 2022. Initially assisting with odd jobs around the center, Damien's natural leadership and compassion soon led him to take on a more specialized role. Drawing from his background and expertise, he began offering Mental Health First Aid classes to the community, equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge to support mental wellness. Together, Damien and Vicki form an unstoppable force for good within the community. Their tireless efforts extend far beyond their volunteer duties; they have become trusted confidants, compassionate listeners, and pillars of strength for those in need. Their genuine care and unwavering dedication have touched countless lives, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of all who have had the privilege of crossing paths with them.

Kerry Holst, School Breakfast Program Volunteer -

Kerry Holst is part of the fabric of the team at the YMCA Schools' Breakfast program and has been volunteering since 2012. Not only has Kerry been dedicated to helping with admin support across these years, Kerry also has volunteered further as a Grants Coordinator - being successful in obtaining grant funds for many critical components of the program. Kerry has a busy family life, still works part time and works around her commitments to come and assist us every week, sometimes more than once if she has space in her calendar. A very big thank you and recognition to Kerry Holst for her wonderful support and help to our program as it means a lot. She is a valued part of the YMCA Schools' Breakfast Program. Thank you so much Kerry for your dedication to our program and students.

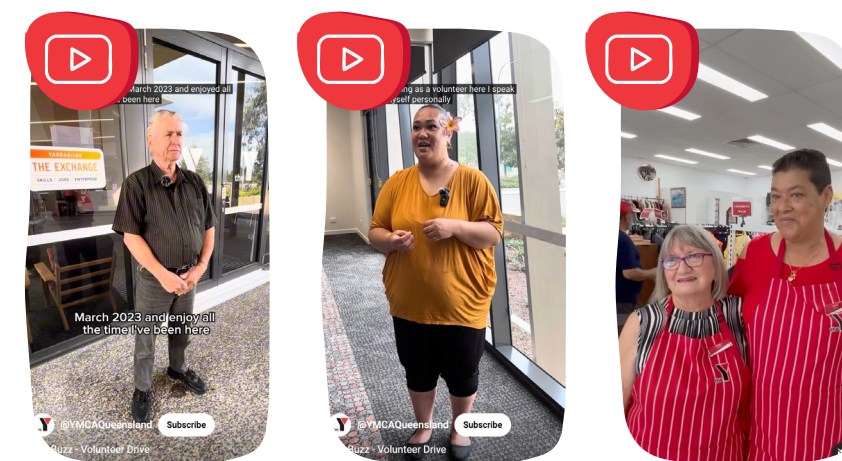


Tobias Kennett Awarded Queensland Youth Volunteer of the Year

"I think that it is very important that young people become active members of their community"

Tobias Kennett, our Parliamentary and Education Officer from Y Queensland Queensland Youth Parliament, was awarded the Queensland Youth Volunteer of the Year Award in May! Tobias was honoured at Brisbane City Hall during National Volunteering Week for his outstanding work and dedication to our community.

"I am really blessed to work with the wonderful YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament volunteer team. They give so much of their time to help young people advocate for their communities and develop into empowered young leaders. They have also taught me a lot about myself and where I want to go in my life."



Left video: VOLUNTEERS – Kevin, The Buzz. Middle video: VOLUNTEERS – Pen, The Buzz. Right video: VOLUNTEERS – Eileen & Astrid, Op Shops.

RECREATION Camping

Y Queensland Camping hosted 14,803 campers in 2023/24 and provided over 55,000 activities. Our team of Outdoor Leaders provided a range of outdoor and educational activities designed to foster a sense of trust and cooperation, challenge fears and build resilience in young people. Outdoor Leaders promote environmental awareness and stewardship, encourage problem-solving and critical thinking, help participants understand acceptable risk and provide opportunities for growth and well-being.

“My son just got back from school camp and said he had a great time! His favourite activity, the Giant Swing! I also wanted to do a special shout out to the Instructors... My son said their words really stuck with him throughout the camp and encouraged him to put his anxiety to the side and enjoy his time. So, a big thank you!”

Camps also provide an amazing opportunity for young people to learn independence and build community. Camp is often the first time away from home for many young people who learn valuable life skills and presents an opportunity to contribute to their community by assisting with food service, sweeping out cabins and supporting their peers.

2023/24 was also a period of development at Y Queensland Camping with construction of a new Kitchen and Dining Hall. The new Kitchen will help serve nutritious and healthy meals to thousands of campers over the coming years.

A REVIEW FROM AN 8-YEAR-OLD CAMPER:

I thought YMCA was fun because first the instructors were nice to me and my friends. I definitely recommend YMCA camp for kids/adults that want a good experience at camp or first school camp. The activities were super fun, the food was great especially breakfast and dessert. The cabins were great and I had very nice sleep in the bed, the showers were great too. You get to learn about stuff that maybe you have never learned before probably my favorite activities had to be Archery, Low Ropes, Damper Making and playing in the pool. I almost forgot about Possum Glider... I loved my experiences at YMCA camp!



Outcomes – Environmental:

In early 2024, Y Camping in collaboration with Bush care and local wildlife conservation groups embarked on an environmental project to remove invasive weed and non-native plants from our Camp Bundalong site. The project also included planting of 1079 native plant and tree species to expand the riparian corridor helping provide safer passage for local wildlife as well as providing valuable habitat. The project was funded by the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation's, Community Sustainability Action Grants. The project included ten 'working bee' events attracting 27 volunteers who contributed a combined 821 volunteer hours across the project.



RETAIL Op Shops

Our Y Queensland Op Shops are more than just stores; they're a vibrant part of our local communities.

A Labour of Love: Our three shops in Mt Gravatt, Mango Hill, and Strathpine are powered by a dedicated team of volunteers, ranging from young enthusiasts to seasoned wisdom keepers.

A Stepping Stone to Success: We're proud to offer vocational students a hands-on learning experience, helping them gain valuable skills and certifications.

A Bridge to Opportunity: Our shops are a Centrelink-approved destination for individuals seeking to fulfil job obligations or gain work experience through volunteering.

Giving Back, Paying Forward: Your generous donations fuel our mission to make a sustainable difference. We carefully sort and sell items, with proceeds supporting various community initiatives. Unsold items are recycled responsibly, minimizing waste.

A Helping Hand: We're more than just a shop. We're a community hub. Our Strathpine store partners with Nourish St. to collect food and camping gear for those experiencing homelessness. During the harsh winter months, our Mt Gravatt shop provided essential items like blankets, sleeping bags, and warm clothing to families in need.

A Ripple Effect: Our Mango Hill shop supports numerous organizations, including the Kidney Foundation, Encircle, Homeless Men Charity, Umpi Krumba, and DV Families, by donating homewares and manchester.

A Community Connected: Our enthusiastic volunteer teams work tirelessly to ensure that every donation finds its best purpose. Beyond the sales floor, our shops foster connections. We've participated in R U OK? Day to promote mental health awareness and provide a friendly space for our volunteers and loyal customers to connect and support one another.

By shopping at our Y Op Shops, you're not just making a purchase; you're contributing to a stronger, more compassionate community.



Interview with a volunteer: Renata Tsiamis

Q: What made you decide to volunteer with Y Queensland Op Shop?

Renata: I was volunteering at the QEII hospital but after my husband passed away, I picked YMCA Op Shops because my son Michael works for the YMCA. I was unable to continue volunteering at the QEII during Covid, so had more time to volunteer at the Op Shop. It will be my 7th year volunteering with the Y Op Shop at Mt Gravatt this Christmas, and I still love it!

Q: What's a typical day like at Y Queensland Op Shop?

Renata: We receive donations, some days several carloads – which are then sorted by the sorting team. Items get cleaned and priced; then put into the shop for sale. My job is to then sell all the wonderful stock as quickly as possible otherwise we will run out of room for new incoming donations. I love that I can help customers find what they are looking for. One lovely customer came in with her teen daughter to look for a dress she needed for a school play. I found a dress that fitted her daughter perfectly as if it was custom made for her. My customer cried tears of joy when she saw her daughter in the dress! It's rewarding at my age – I'm turning 81 this December!

Q: What do you like best about volunteering at Y Queensland Op Shop?

Renata: I do not like to landfill and am very conscious about what we do to the environment. It is very important to me knowing that I am contributing by recycling and encouraging others to reuse. I love working with the team at Mt Gravatt – we've become friends and treat each other like family. You can tell because I sometimes nag like a mother would, especially to eat their lunch on time!



RETAIL Hotel

George Williams Hotel – A year of growth and giving back

The George Williams Hotel has experienced a remarkable year, marked by significant growth and a renewed commitment to our community.

While we've achieved impressive results, such as record-high occupancy rates and longer guest stays, our true satisfaction lies in the positive impact we've made for our wider community.

Thanks to the revitalisation efforts of the Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA), our city has become a thriving destination, attracting visitors from far and wide. This surge in tourism has not only benefited our hotel but has also boosted local businesses and created jobs.

As we look to the future, we're excited to continue our journey of growth and giving back. With your support, we can make an even greater impact on our community.



From left to right: Graham Walker, Damian Foley, Kirsty Kranz, Shane Stevenson

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

At Y Queensland, safeguarding children and young people is of utmost importance, as reflected in our 'Feel Safe and Be Safe' mantra, training and policy and procedures, and as reflected in our day-to-day practice. We work consciously at all levels and in all of our services to ensure that all children and young people feel safe and are safe, and when they don't feel or aren't safe, we are responsive and act with genuine care to respond to their needs.

Y Queensland works closely with the Y National team to ensure safeguarding is implemented in all areas of our business, as guided by our National Safeguarding Framework which integrates safeguarding into three pillars, being 'Culture, Environment and Operations'.

Safeguarding is reflected in Y Queensland's culture at all levels with an understanding that a safe culture is something that is more often 'felt' and which welcomes an openness to others, children and young people, staff, parents or community members, to speak up and have their voices heard and respected. This is also reflected in the Y's 'Stay Safe, Tell Someone' Program, which shares and encourages consistent language and messaging around the importance of sharing to keep children and young people safe, rather than a culture of keeping secrets.

This core messaging around sharing worries or concerns in order to create a safe culture also leads to creating safe environments for children and young people to play, learn and build confidence and relationships. Teams within Y Queensland work hard to not only create environments that feel physically inviting and that meet their physical, developmental and mental needs, but also ones that will meet their emotional and sensory needs, which is vital

to creating a sense of safety within our spaces and our services.

Operationally, Y Queensland will ensure that in all of our planning, services and business engagements that connect with Safeguarding and Safety for children and young people, protection of the most vulnerable is forefront of our minds and actions, at all times. Safeguarding works closely in all areas of business to consult and support decision-making so that the safety of children and young people remain at the top of our agenda in all areas of business. Safeguarding intentionally plans for, manages and assesses the risks to and needs of children and young people via reading and reviewing behavioural/safeguarding incident reports, connecting with staff and services, as well as via offering and guiding training for Y staff to assist them to gain confidence and professional and practical knowledge to respond to big behaviours and, at times, disclosures and indicators of harm and abuse. Such collaboration sees strong oversight and appropriate and swift responses where necessary when children and young people are observed to be at risk of harm.

Y Queensland Safeguarding Manager Kirsty Kranz and Safeguarding Advisor Graham Walker, with the support and guidance of CEO Damian Foley, COO William Sambrook, Executive Lead of Risk & Compliance Shane Stevenson, have an absolute commitment to Safeguarding children and young people in Y Queensland and have continued to work to not only meet Safeguarding standards at a State and National level, but to exceed and to continue to explore and develop Safeguarding Practice to a level of excellence.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

We acknowledge and thank you for everything you do to support our work building healthy, connected and thriving communities.

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Y Queensland sincerely thank the many staff who support our social impact programs through monthly payroll donations.



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Creating healthy,
connected and
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Y QUEENSLAND/Y-CARE (SOUTH EAST QLD) INC.

107 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006 **p:** (07) 3253 1700
e: brisbane@ymcaqueensland.org.au **w:** ymcaqueensland.org.au

