



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS
AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



Big Brothers Big Sisters

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Pictured above at the BBBS new office launch with special guest, local MP Claire O'Neill conducting the official opening.
L-R: Darryn Keneally, Secretary | Mark Watt AM, CEO | Clare O'Neill, MP | Bernie Glassor, Chairman | Andrew Kay, Treasurer

A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Australia spent the last six months of 2019 exploring options for a more sustainable model, one that would not only provide stability for current programs but would position the organisation for growth.

The focus was given to securing a future for the organisation and most importantly a future that would enable the continuation of support to vulnerable young people

We worked hard during this time to support all existing matches, and we thank our mentors, families, school partners and referral agencies for their patience and the additional help they've provided to support young people during this time.

As part of this change in October 2019 a new leadership was announced, with incoming CEO Mark Watt AM and new Board of Directors.

Mark Watt AM (founder of Whitelion) will lead the organisation into this new phase. Mark brings more than 25 years' experience supporting Australia's most at-risk young people. Mark is extremely passionate and committed to mentoring and believes Big Brothers Big Sisters has a bright future in Australia under his leadership.

The board is extremely dedicated and looking forward to supporting BBBS into the future.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darryn Keneally OAM - Secretary/Public Officer
Bernie Glaser - Chairperson
Andrew Kay - Treasurer
Mark Watt AM - Ex officio Member
Tania Hutchison - Ex officio Member



FROM THE CEO

It's hard to believe the financial end of year has arrived, it has certainly been a big year for Big Brothers Big Sisters!

As the co-Founder of Whitelion I have dedicated the best part of the last 20 years to the organisation.

Despite my immense pride at all that Whitelion has achieved I was thrilled to announce that I had made the move to Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia – and as their new CEO would be leading the organisation into a new exciting future.

I am passionate about the role mentoring can and does make and know that together with the BBBS staff team, volunteer mentors and supporters we can make a bigger impact in the lives of vulnerable young people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing CEO, Sarah Downie, Board of Directors and BBBS staff for all their support and encouragement during the transition.

I would like to thank all our incredible volunteers, individual donors and sponsors for their continued support.

As we move forward and navigate the way ahead it is important to state that BBBS acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We recognise the challenging time that people in our community and our world are currently facing. There is a need for social connection, friendship and support now more than ever, as people experience these uncertain times. When so many young people are facing fear and physical isolation, it is essential that we find ways to connect and share our expertise in long term mentoring programs.

We must all remind ourselves that we're part of a greater community, and that our greater purpose is to emerge from this crisis with the tools to build a better world.

I look forward to sharing the next year with you all and continuing to support our young people.

MARK WATT AM



ABOUT US

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia has close to 40 years' experience providing long-term, one-to-one mentoring programs throughout the community, in schools and most recently online - to help change the course of young people's lives.

By matching a vulnerable young person with an adult volunteer mentor, we provide a safe environment to help build their confidence, increase their resilience and open their minds to new possibilities, ultimately creating stronger individuals and communities.

WHAT DRIVES US

Big Brothers Big Sisters knows that youth have the potential to succeed despite vulnerability and adversity. Confident in this potential and the value of professionally supported mentoring relationships, we work with young people who face any number of challenges including not having the support of a positive adult role model.

WHAT WE DO

Big Brothers Big Sisters offers one-to-one mentoring programs throughout the community, in schools and online which meet the varied needs of vulnerable children from 7 to 17 years of age, their families and the broader community. Serving as positive, adult role models, our volunteer mentors teach vulnerable young people by example the importance of giving, and of giving back, of staying in school, and having respect.

We make sure our programs work safely, effectively and efficiently by implementing:

- best practice recruitment and screening of mentors
- ongoing training of mentors
- structured, ongoing supervision of all
- mentoring matches
- documented standards, processes and policies

HOW WE ARE DIFFERENT

BBBS mentoring programs are proven to work and are different in a number of ways from many other mentoring organisations that support young people in need.

We provide long-term, one-to-one mentoring relationships with volunteer mentors who commit a minimum of 12 months. This gives young people a stable relationship they can rely on over a significant amount of time rather than just a 'one off' occasion, which does not yield the same results.

BBBS has stood the test of time all over the world. Bigs have been mentoring young people in need around the world for 110 years and across Australia we have close to 40 years' experience. Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia is one of 14 countries affiliated with Big Brothers Big Sisters International, the world's largest volunteer supported mentoring network.



Our Impact

Why Youth Mentoring is critical

Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians aged ¹

15 – 24

1 in 10

young people are completely disengaged from education, employment and training ²

Mental ill health contributes to nearly

50%

of the burden of disease in young people ³

75%

of mental health problems occur before the age of 25 ³

1 in 3

young people are without adequate work (unemployed or underemployed) ⁴

In Australia, it costs on average

\$1,579 per day

to keep a young person in youth detention ⁵ vs.

\$2,500 for 12 months

for Big Brothers Big Sisters to mentor one vulnerable young person

Source:

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2015) Causes of Death

² Reeve, R., Marjolin, A., Muir, K., Powell, A., Hannigan, N., Ramia, I. and Etuk, L. (Eds.) Australia's Social Pulse. Centre for Social Impact: UNSW Australia, Sydney and UWA, Perth

³ Kessler, R.C., et al., Age of onset mental disorders: a review of recent literature. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 2007. 20(4): p. 359-364.

Kessler, R.D., et al., Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005. 62: p. 593-602.

⁴ Muir, K., Butler, R. and Powell, A. (2015) A whacking stick is not enough to get young people into work, *The Conversation*

⁵ (Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2017, Ch 17 Youth Justice Services)

Our Impact

Social return on Investment.

\$18:1

\$1 invested in mentoring by Big Brothers Big Sisters, returns \$18 to economically disadvantaged groups.¹

\$23:1

\$1 invested in mentoring by Big Brothers Big Sisters returns \$23 to society.¹

Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs provide significant benefits to young people and the wider community.



96%

say they're happy¹



92%

feel confident¹



98%

believe they make good life choices¹



81%

report financial literacy¹



80%

pursue healthy lifestyles¹



17%

more likely to be employed¹



47%

hold senior leadership positions¹



63%

have post-secondary education¹



87%

have strong networks of family & friends¹

Young people (Littles) who had a volunteer mentor (Big) in their life were:



46%

less likely to begin using illegal drugs²



27%

less likely to begin using alcohol²



52%

less likely to skip school²



33%

less likely to use violence²

Reference:

¹ Boston Consulting Group SROI Study Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada.

² Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

ONLINE MENTORING - OURSPACE

We worked quickly to respond to COVID-19 understanding the negative impact social isolation was having on both the young people who are being mentored and those who are due to be matched.



THE OURSPACE PROGRAM

BBBS mentoring is experiencing both challenges and opportunities during this period when COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is impacting on life as we know it.

The pandemic has placed enormous stress on young people in vulnerable families, putting them at risk of increased mental and physical health problems. Isolation, depression and family conflict issues are further exacerbated by the lock down.

With face to face mentoring no longer an option, BBBS was able to respond by moving matches to a fit for purpose, secure online platform which has already been in operation.

Developed in partnership with Walt Disney Australia over 5 years ago the platform was originally created as a result of the increasing demand for long term mentoring for geographically isolated young people or those in isolation due to health issues.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There is now a great deal of national and international interest in OurSpace. The platform is unique in that it provides a safe, secure, video space that is observable by the mentoring coordinator.

OurSpace is a fantastic opportunity for BBBS Australia to share their online mentoring experience with the world.

CASE STUDY - ALYSHA & SARAH

Recently COVID-19 has meant that Sarah's school has closed and students are learning from home, which meant that Alysha could no longer spend face to face time with Sarah. To help them remain connected, BBBS provided access to Ourspace.

Alysha and Sarah embraced the opportunity to continue to catch up on the platform. The platform has allowed the pair to connect weekly and check in with each other at their regular time. It allows the continuation of their relationship and the support for Sarah who has found a close friend in Alysha.

Ourspace - a unique, safe, secure online mentoring platform

WHAT IS NEEDED

The Ourspace platform requires ongoing IT maintenance to ensure the platform is kept up to date for existing matches and to enable new matches during the pandemic and beyond. BBBS is actively seeking funding for this to happen.

COVID-19 MENTORING ONLINE SURVEY - MAY/JUNE 2020

- 95.24% of mentees reported that catching up with their mentor online during COVID-19 has helped them to feel more connected
- 100% of mentees feel that mentoring has had a positive impact on them
- 100% of mentees reported that they catching up with their mentor has been enjoyable
- 95.24% of mentees reported that they feel comfortable catching up with their mentor online
- 80.95% of mentees reported that having a mentor makes them feel less lonely
- 42.86% of mentees who identified their mentor as being one of their main sources of support during COVID-19
- 95.24% mentees felt their mentor has been someone who has supported them during COVID-19



Big Brothers Big Sisters

IN SCHOOL MENTORING

"This program is amazing in that it offers security, support and protection for both the student and mentor and will offer important and crucial support in our current global climate."

Ringwood Secondary College



THE PROGRAM

Big Brothers Big Sisters In School mentoring programs increase connectedness to communities, families and friends.

BBBS coordinators work with school wellbeing teams to identify vulnerable students and match them up to a mentor, based on shared interests, personality and background. The mentor and student spend 1-2 hours a week together.

Online Mentoring has been a great way to connect some of our existing matches although some students have a preference for face to face and therefore would prefer to wait to see their mentor when they return to school.

For new referrals, the wellbeing coordinators have been excited by the idea of continuing to make student referrals to their mentor online and are working on this transition.

CASE STUDY JACK & HIS MENTOR

Jack is in Year 9 and lives with his mother and younger sister who suffers from an eating disorder. He is estranged from his father. Jack is on the Autism Spectrum. He was referred to the program as he has very few friends and no male role model.

His mother wanted him to have somebody to talk to about his problems as a growing teen with ASD. She is hoping that through the mentoring relationship he will gain skills on how to build and maintain friendships and not feel so alone.

Jack's Mentor is a 29 year old real estate agent who presents as gentle and engaging. He enjoys cooking, watching sport and keeping fit.

Jack and his mentor have built a solid connection and continue to catch up weekly at school. They enjoy playing games together such as connect 4 and chatting about their pets.

The wellbeing team feel that mentoring is a safe place for Jack to express himself with no judgement, which he does not always feel out in the school yard.

Jack and his mentor are eager to be able to continue to catch up on OurSpace while schools are closed.

Jack's mother expressed that she is very pleased for Jack to have access to OurSpace as he will really benefit from extra support right now.

(names have been changed to protect the privacy of our mentor and mentee)

Wellbeing teachers have been excited to continue student referrals

WHAT IS NEEDED

The program requires funding in order for the demand to match more students with mentors to be met.

BALLARAT COMMUNITY PROGRAM

A regional mentoring strategy addressing the disadvantaged position many of our young people face in rural and regional communities and the compounding effect of not having traditional community services to turn to.



THE PROGRAM

The Ballarat Mentoring Model offers 3 Mentoring Programs.

1. Community Based one 2 one mentoring
2. Group and Peer mentoring program (in development)
3. Wellbeing and Resilience workshops (see side panel)

The Community Based Mentoring program in Ballarat has several matches that are currently transitioning to online mentoring. Other imminent matches are also about to commence their connection also online.

The group mentoring program conversations and meetings had started well with interest from agencies and organisations in Ballarat.

During the lock down period, these conversations are continuing so that collaboration around the implementation of a group mentoring program that provides the most vulnerable young people the opportunity to benefit from the positive life changing outcomes that mentoring can provide.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Prior to the pandemic BBBS was in communication with Ballarat schools to engage them in the school workshops aspect of the Ballarat Community Model. At this point in time the school aspect of the program is waiting until face to face schooling resumes.

Stride Education programs has partnered with BBBS to deliver resilience and wellness workshops to the young people of Ballarat and we are working with schools and organisations to create a community around mentoring that includes skill building with a focus on resilience, friendship and connection.

CASE STUDY - JHETT & DENIS

JHETT SAYS

I meet Denis every week for 1-11/2 hours and we go swimming, walking to the Library for trivia, chess as well as the Botanical Gardens, Crazy Golf and down the street. We have fun and I enjoy hanging out with a nice person with a sense of humour like me - we are both redheads! I am comfortable with Denis

DENIS SAYS:

The match between me and Jhett has been Grand! When we first met, we made a list of all the things we would like to do together. I feel that Jhett is comfortable to talk to me about things that he is finding hard or is curious about. He asks questions about school and challenges with friends and my experiences. He seems to value my opinions.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

A project developed in response to the overwhelming demand from parents/carers and community organisations needing help to support a young person.



THE PROGRAM

The Community Connections Program has been developed as a direct response to the number of enquiries BBBS receives via email and phone.

The majority of enquiries are made up of people wanting to refer young people to a mentoring program. These enquiries are Australia wide with the majority looking for a male mentor.

There are is an overwhelming amount of enquiries coming in weekly and desperate pleas for help from parents, carers, grandparents and other agencies.

Our dedicated volunteer response team answer as many queries as possible in their shifts. Overall it has been found that people are grateful for the contact, happy just to talk things through and very open about sharing their situation.

THE NEED

Managing the BBBS enquiries has demonstrated a tangible need for mentoring in communities across Australia.

Feedback from families and services making referrals has highlighted a gap in services for the provision of non-professional, social support for young people who often find themselves in need of friendship and someone to spend time with outside of other professional counselling and care services that they may be receiving

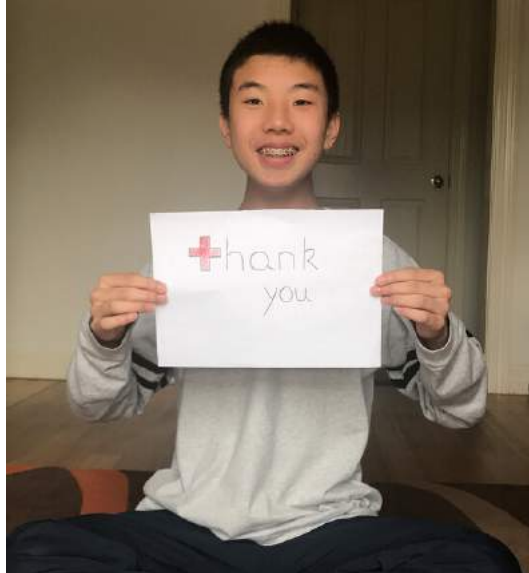
SUPPORT ENQUIRY EXAMPLE

FROM A GRANDMOTHER/CARER: Recently gained custody of young grandson who has a cognitive impairment. In addition the grandmother has custody of the two granddaughters.

The grandfather works long hours leaving the grandmother to do most of the child care.

The grandson is not settling well most of the time being the only male around the house. He is now displaying aggression towards female students at school and his siblings at home. On the positive side he enjoys the outdoors and has a knowledge of his Aboriginal culture

The Grandmothers request is for a Mentor who can be that male role model that can take time to teach him to be proud of himself, understand the day to day challenges and just have quality time.



YOUNG ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

THE PROGRAM

The participants of YAP are students from all across Melbourne, who have been identified as hard working or high achieving.

Students are given a volunteer mentor in their chosen career choice, allowing them to gather an insight into their chosen profession. In conjunction with mentoring, the students are also given workshops which range from workplace skills, mental health and multi-culturalism.

YOUNG ACHIEVERS ALUMNI

Upon graduating from the Young Achievers program, both mentors and young people are encouraged to join the Alumni committee.

The committee enables young people who have benefited from BBBS mentoring to stay connected with the organisation throughout their career journey in the hope that they are able to share their story, as well as providing an avenue for them to give back to the organisation

SOCIAL ISOLATION PROJECT

Led by the Young Achievers Alumni, BBBS is developing a project to address social isolation amongst young people.

VicHealth have identified increasing positive social connections among young people as a focus area within their mental health wellbeing strategy for 2019-2023. The evidence for a need to target this issue is clear:-

- 75% of psychological problems start under age 25
- Suicide remains the biggest killer of young Australians.
- There are more youth risk factors than ever before.

Part of this project is to host a hackathon, involving young people, corporates and human centred design experts, to breakdown the issue of loneliness and identify a solution. The solution will then be implemented to achieve three main outcomes:

1. Provide self-growth and skill development opportunities for the young achiever participants
2. Increase social connectedness amongst young people.
3. Fundraise to directly benefit BBBS program enabling more mentoring matches to be created.



Big Brothers Big Sisters

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

ANDREWS FOUNDATION

COCA-COLA FOUNDATION

DHHS VICTORIA

ELANOR INVESTOR GROUP

FRANK & FLORA LEITH

GO SALARY

LEGUP FOUNDATION

MATANA

NEORA

PHILIP & VIVIEN BRASS CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

THE CHARLES PELLEGRINO FOUNDATION

THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY AUSTRALIA

THE WILLIAM BUCKLAND FOUNDATION



He's just a really,
really good friend...



Jonathan, age 12

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

DONATE

Contributions no matter how big or small provide a lifetime investment in a you person's future. Right now, we have hundreds of disadvantaged children who, through no fault of their own, have little opportunity to develop positive and robust relationships with a positive role-model.

Your donation will help us to provide the opportunity to positively change the course of a child's life through a relationship built on friendship, trust, guidance and empowerment.

A mentor will help a child build resilience, stay at school, improve their relationships with family/ community and break the cycle of disadvantage.

Yes I would like to help a young person today. click here [DONATE ONLINE](#)

VOLUNTEER

We are always seeking mentors and skilled volunteers that can help support our organisation. If you are interested in volunteering click here [VOLUNTEER ENQUIRY](#)

FUNDRAISE

You can introduce us to potential partners. Take part in our challenge events throughout the year. Attend our annual Bike Ride Event. Or propose your own fundraising ideas for us to review, all ideas are welcome.

If you would like to be involved contact us at support@bbbsau.org



Big Brothers Big Sisters

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