



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Australia

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



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A Word From The Chair

As we reflect on another remarkable year, it's with immense gratitude that I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to the success of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Each team member, no matter their role or task, plays a vital part in the positive impact we achieve together.

To our incredible mentors, who selflessly give their time and provide nurturing guidance to young people, and to the support teams who create the foundation that makes this process possible—your efforts are invaluable. To our mentees, whose openness to learning and growth often leads them to become mentors themselves, you are the heart of our programs and a testament to their enduring power.

We also owe much to our sponsors and supporters, whose unwavering commitment fuels our mission year after year. Your presence at our events and your generous contributions ensure the sustainability of programs that change lives. To my fellow Board Members—Kingsley Munday, Darryn Keneally, Cindy Hines, and Andy Kay—I am deeply grateful for your wisdom, dedication, and service. Together, you bring strength and direction to the vision of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

A special thank you to our exceptional management team: CEO, Mark Watt AM and Operations Manager, Tania Hutchison, whose leadership and resilience keep us moving forward despite the challenges. Your unshakable belief in our mission reminds us why this work matters. The opportunity to positively shape a young person's life is a privilege and a reward like no other.

As we look to the future, let's remember the importance of our work: today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. Let's continue to empower them to be the very best they can be.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernie Glaser'.

With gratitude and hope,
Bernie Glaser
Chairperson Big Brothers Big Sisters

Board of Directors
Bernie Glaser
Darryn Keneally OAM
Andrew Kay
Kingsley Munday AM
Cindy Hynes



Message From The CEO

2024 has been a transformative year for Big Brothers Big Sisters, marked by growth, innovation, and meaningful impact. I am incredibly proud of our dedicated team, whose passion and hard work continue to empower young people and strengthen our communities.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our committed volunteer mentors, many of whom go above and beyond to provide invaluable support to the children and young people in our programs. Your dedication inspires us every day. To the children, young people, and their families who participate in our programs, thank you for trusting us to be part of your journey.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of our supporters and partners. A special thank you to the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre, our corporate sponsors, donors, and community champions. Your unwavering support enables us to take bold steps forward and create lasting change.

This year, we celebrated four standout events: the AFL Luncheon, the Bail Out Challenge, our Annual Dinner, and the Larapinta Trek. The trek was one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences I've ever undertaken, made possible by an incredible team and the determination to support our mission. These events have been so impactful that they're already locked into our calendar for 2025.

As we continue to evolve, we've focused on launching new and exciting initiatives to deepen our impact. A highlight is the Change Makers Club, a subscription-based model designed to foster ongoing engagement and provide vital support for our programs. Initiatives like this are crucial to ensuring the sustainability of our work and creating more opportunities for young people.

Our commitment to delivering high-quality, impactful programs remains central to everything we do. This year, we've made significant progress in strengthening our evaluation processes, ensuring we can measure outcomes effectively. At the same time, we remain steadfast in upholding the highest standards of child safety and well-being as we transform lives across the country.

As we look ahead to 2025, I'm excited by the opportunities to expand our reach and introduce more innovative initiatives that will empower young people to achieve their potential. Together, we're shaping a brighter future. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Mark Watt AM
CEO Big Brothers Big Sisters

About Us

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Australia

We believe in the transformative power of mentoring to break cycles of disadvantage and empower young people to reach their full potential.

For over 25 years, we have provided long-term, evidence-based mentoring programs that create meaningful connections between young people and positive adult role models. Our commitment to building brighter futures is grounded in over a century of international expertise, making us one of the most respected and impactful mentoring organisations globally.

At Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia, we prioritise the safety, well-being, participation, and empowerment of all children and young people. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse.

We are committed to the cultural safety of children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with disabilities, providing a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Our Mission

BUILDING CONNECTIONS, INSPIRING POTENTIAL - Our mission is to change the lives of young people

Our program supports children and young people aged 7–17 by carefully matching them with screened volunteer mentors who serve as consistent, positive role models. Through regular one-on-one interactions—just 1–2 hours a week for a minimum of 12 months—mentors

help mentees develop resilience, foster emotional well-being, and build a sense of belonging.

These relationships fill a vital gap in the lives of young people, offering stability and encouragement as they navigate the challenges of growing up. Mentors provide support that extends beyond the individual, positively impacting families, caregivers, and the broader community.



The Challenge

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD MALTREATMENT & ADVERSITY

In 2023, the Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) unveiled alarming data on childhood maltreatment in Australia, surveying over 8,500 individuals aged 16 and older. The study found that more than a quarter of young people aged 16–24 had endured three to five types of abuse during their childhood. This aligns with findings from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, which reported that 72% of children have

faced at least one adverse childhood experience, and over 50% encountered two or more by age 11. These adversities, such as isolation, family violence, depression, and poverty, create lasting vulnerabilities impacting emotional well-being and educational outcomes.

It is within this context that Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia operates, providing a critical early intervention and preventative approach to mitigate the impact of these experiences.

Our Approach



A LONG-TERM, EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

What sets Big Brothers Big Sisters apart is our unwavering commitment to long-term mentoring relationships

This approach, grounded in international best practices and evidence-based research, ensures that young people experience sustained support during critical developmental periods.

These outcomes underscore the importance of mentorship as a tool for breaking the cycle of disadvantage and unlocking the potential within each young person.

Our History and Reach

Established in 1996, Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia has grown into a trusted and impactful organisation. We currently operate in Melbourne, Ballarat, Wangaratta, Sydney, and Tumut, offering programs tailored to the unique needs of each community.

Over the years, we have built strong relationships with local organisations, schools, and community groups to expand our reach and deepen our impact. Our ability to adapt global expertise to the Australian context ensures that our programs remain relevant, effective, and accessible.

The Power of Mentorship: Changing Lives, One Match at a Time

The heart of Big Brothers Big Sisters lies in the connections we create. Each match between a young person and a mentor fosters resilience, builds confidence, and inspires growth. By focusing on long-term relationships, we provide consistent support for young people to overcome challenges and thrive. For many mentees, having a mentor is life-changing, offering stability, encouragement, and hope. These relationships benefit both mentees and mentors, creating a ripple effect of positive change in the community.

Our Vision for the Future

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Australia remains committed to expanding our reach and impact. By building stronger partnerships with local organisations, leveraging global expertise, and investing in innovative program delivery, we aim to empower even more young people across the country.

Our vision is a world where every young person has the opportunity to thrive, supported by the guidance and encouragement of a caring mentor. Together, we can break the cycle of disadvantage, foster resilience, and build brighter futures—one match at a time.

“

Big Brothers Big Sisters has been exactly what I hoped it would be. Drae hasn't just found a friend, we've all found a friend, Drae has certainly blossomed.

— Nicole, Drae's mother

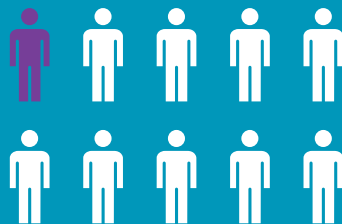


Mentor: Brian
and Mentee:
Drae (aged 8)

Why Our Work Is Critical

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

15-24

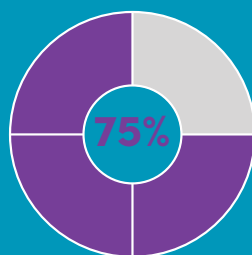


1 in 10

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



Poor mental health contributes to nearly 50% of the burden of disease in young people ³



of mental health problems occur before the age of 25 ³



1 in 3

young people are without adequate work (unemployed or under-employed) ⁴

In Australia, it costs on average

\$1,579

per day

to keep a young person in youth detention



Cost of Big Brothers Big Sisters

\$2,900

per YEAR

to mentor one vulnerable young person (cost to screen & train volunteers as mentors \$700)

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)

The Need

Young Person Profile



15%

GENERAL NEED

General need for role model (limited access to similar gender or age)



23%

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Environmental drivers such as COVID, social issues, anxiety



31%

FAMILY DRIVEN

Mental Health, domestic violence caused issues



31%

MENTAL HEALTH

Diagnosed mental health issues (ADHD, Autism, Asperger's)

Gender & Age Profile



32% Female

1.5% Non Binary

66.5% Male

55% Aged between 11-14

Our Impact

Social Return on Investment

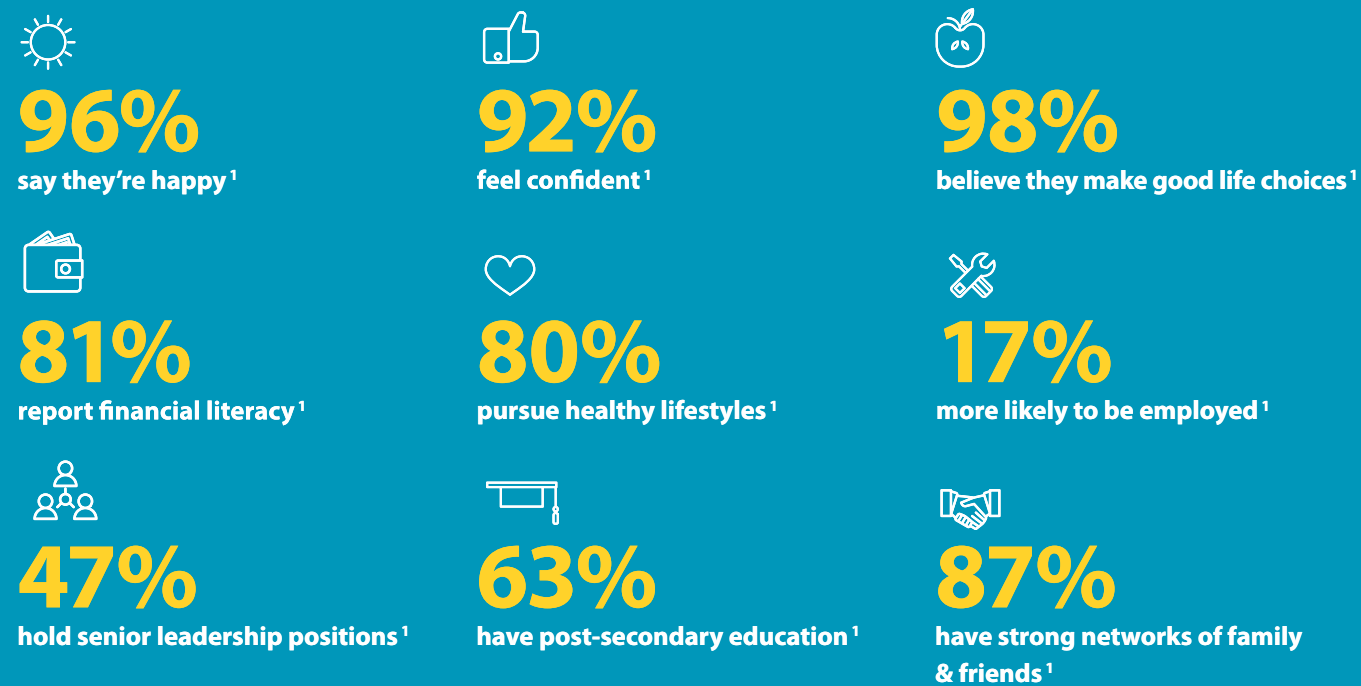


\$1 invested in mentoring by Big Brothers Big Sisters, returns \$18 to economically disadvantaged groups.¹

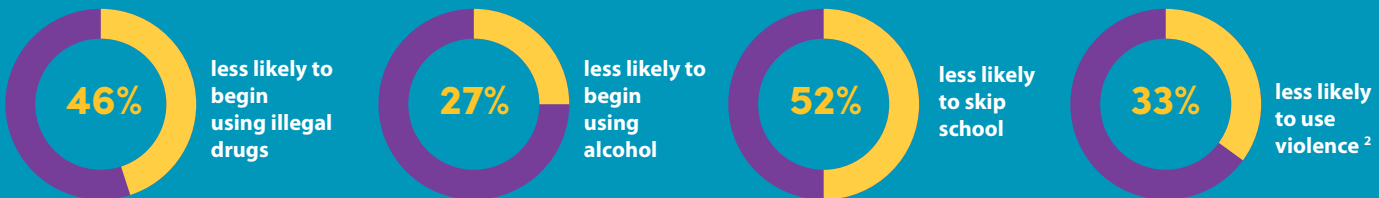


\$1 invested in mentoring by Big Brothers Big Sisters, returns \$23 to society.¹

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



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





Measuring Impact

Over the past four years, we have been actively advancing our evaluation capabilities to ensure the effectiveness and impact of our programs. A key milestone in this journey has been the implementation of Social Suite as our evaluation software, enabling us to streamline and manage our monitoring and evaluation activities effectively.

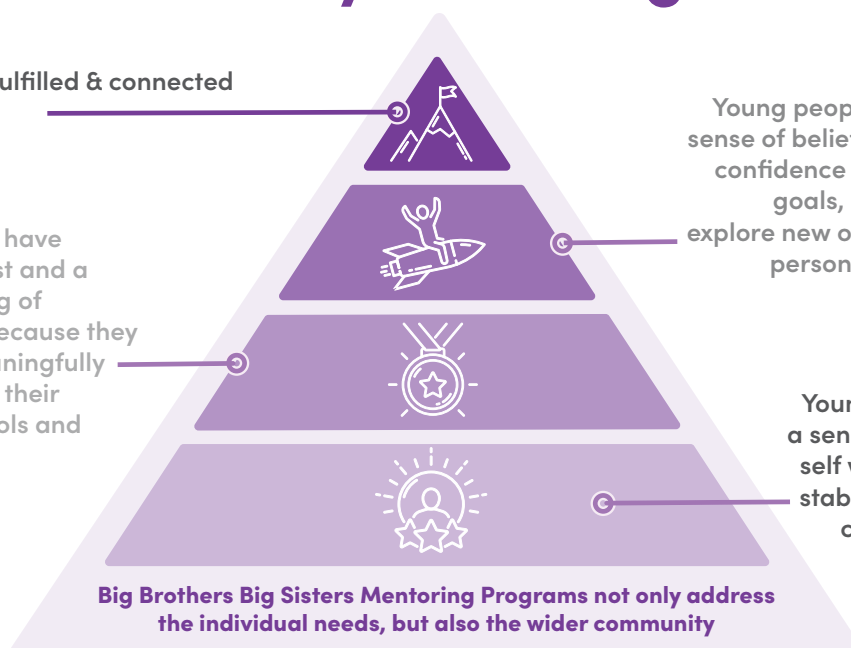
With a presence in 14 countries, the Big Brothers Big Sisters network provides access to robust methodologies and impact reporting. These insights highlight the tangible outcomes of our programs, reinforcing our commitment to ongoing improvement and delivering meaningful results.

- Reduced educational disengagement at critical transition points.
- Improved school retention and academic performance.
- Enhanced social inclusion and community connection.
- Greater sense of purpose and self-worth, healthier relationships, and lifestyle choices.

Theory of Change

Empowered, fulfilled & connected communities

Young people have increased trust and a greater feeling of acceptance because they are more meaningfully engaged with their families, schools and communities.

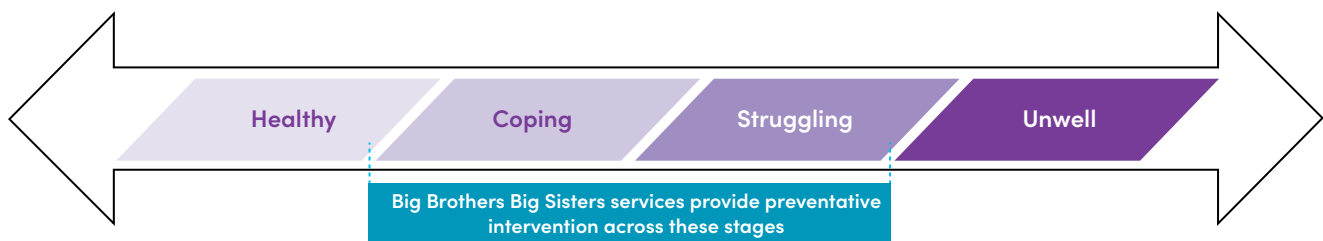


Alignment with the Australian Governments National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Big Brothers Big Sisters' model takes a community-based approach to supporting young people, their families, and networks by providing positive adult role models and empowering youth to develop skills for managing their mental health. Programs focus on preventative intervention at the 'coping' and 'struggling' stages of the wellbeing continuum, emphasizing opportunities to improve functioning and wellbeing before a child becomes unwell.

This approach aligns closely with the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of social and emotional wellbeing, which prioritise holistic health over a sole focus on mental illness.

Intervening at the 'coping' and 'struggling' stages means that benefits include positive outcomes across the entire wellbeing continuum (keeping young people 'healthy' and avoiding digression to being 'unwell'). These benefits are outlined in the below table :



Healthy

Children experience a state of positive mental health and wellbeing

- 62% of mentees have more positive beliefs about their ability to succeed in school
- 64% of mentees have improved academic performance
- 67% of mentees have interests and hobbies

Coping

Children experience challenges to their mental health, but are equipped with the mental resources to manage these effectively

- Mentored girls are 2.5 times more likely to be confident in their ability to be successful at school
- 76% of mentees say they are better able to express feelings
- 56% of mentees report improved personal hygiene and appearance

Struggling

Children experience challenges to their mental health, and are not managing these effectively and need additional support

- Mentored boys are three times less likely to suffer peer pressure
- Mentees are 54% more likely to utilise community and school resources for help

Unwell

Children experience mental illness and considerable challenges to their wellbeing. They need additional support to manage and recover

- Mentees report fewer depressive symptoms following mentoring
- Mentored boys are 2 times less likely to develop negative conducts like bullying, fighting, lying, cheating or losing their temper
- 47% of mentees are better able to avoid illegal behaviour
- 40% of mentees are better able to avoid substance abuse

Source:

¹Evidence drawn from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch (2018); Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2013). Executive Summary | National Mental Health Commission

Our Programs



Mark came into Jaxx's life without any preconceived notions. He didn't have any bias, he just brought a fresh, new perspective, and keeps showing up for Jaxx.

— Jenny, Grandmother of Jaxxon



Mentor: Brett &
Mentee: Jonah

Melbourne

MELBOURNE'S WESTERN SUBURBS

The Westside Rise Project — a partnership among Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia, Charis Mentoring, and COACH Network, funded by the Australian Government's Safer Communities Fund over 3 years has achieved impactful outcomes across Melbourne's western suburbs.

With funding concluding in June 2024, the project successfully reached over 898 young people, significantly surpassing the original target of 200, more than 4 times the original target!

Through one-to-one, group, and family mentoring, as well as community engagement, the project addressed anti-social behavior by providing at-risk youth with positive, skill-building activities and culturally inclusive events. Notable initiatives, such as the Pasifika cultural celebration and the Kilikiti event, fostered community belonging and personal growth for participants.

The collaborative approach not only enhanced cultural awareness among students and school staff but also decreased anti-social behavior, fostering a safer, more resilient community. The Westside Rise Project's achievements reflect its commitment to long-term community safety and inclusion, creating a lasting, positive impact on youth, families, and the broader community.

Moving forward, the Westside Rise partnership will continue to fundraise and work together to sustain and expand these outcomes, ensuring lasting support and opportunities for at-risk youth and their families in the western suburbs.

westsiderise





Mentor: Sumaya
& Mentee: Nikita

Cranbourne

Big Brothers Big Sisters, supported by the Freemasons Foundation, has successfully launched its mentoring program in Cranbourne, extending its impact to nearby suburbs. The program provides crucial support for young people and families experiencing vulnerability, focusing on educational disengagement and challenging family dynamics.

In collaboration with Stride Education, the program delivered Supportive Friends wellbeing workshops at Cranbourne Secondary College, engaging over 180 students. These workshops have strengthened connections between teachers and students, boosting school engagement and improving educational outcomes for at-risk youth.

Referrals come from local schools, parents, and community organizations, ensuring tailored support for young people facing mental health challenges, family issues, or school refusal. Recent referrals include school refusers, young people from single-parent households, and those experiencing isolation or mental health struggles. Each has been matched with a mentor, providing consistent guidance and emotional support.

The program's partnerships with local groups have strengthened community ties and expanded its volunteer base. By enhancing connectedness, fostering healthier relationships, and promoting school engagement, the program is making a lasting impact in Cranbourne.

Monbulk

In Monbulk, Big Brothers Big Sisters has made significant progress over the past year, with strong support from Monbulk Secondary College, advocate Jeanette Pritchard OAM, and local residents. Community awareness efforts have increased volunteer interest and donations, resulting in five successful mentoring matches.

These matches have positively impacted young people's mental health and social connectedness, particularly in response to challenges from severe storms and COVID lockdowns. Supported by East Melbourne Primary Health Network (EMPHN) and local businesses, the program continues to grow.

Moving forward, the focus will be on recruiting more male mentors and enhancing communication with parents, ensuring sustainable support for Monbulk.



Sydney

The Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program in Sydney has experienced significant growth and success over the past year.

One of the standout programs is the Youth Mentoring Program, funded by the NSW Department of Communities & Justice.

This program focuses on young people aged 10-17 who come into contact with the police and courts in South Sydney's Police Area Command. Its primary aim is to reduce the overrepresentation of these young people in avoidable short-term remand by providing them with positive adult role models and support.

The program has faced challenges due to the complexities of the young people we work with, but we are proud to report significant progress, with successful match meetings paving the way for strong and supportive relationships.

Sydney's West

A significant achievement this year was securing grants to support the Sydney's Western Community Mentoring Program, which will help expand the number of mentor matches.

A key partnership with the Auburn Youth Centre has been especially impactful, highlighted by a community

luncheon that brought together mentors, mentees, and supporters, raising awareness and engagement

Community events and partnerships continue to be central to the program's success, with ongoing outreach efforts aimed at securing corporate support for further growth.

Looking Ahead

Sydney is excited to launch a new mentoring initiative in collaboration with a local Indigenous organisation. This pilot program, set to begin in early 2025, will train and employ young Indigenous mentors to support younger mentees, fostering both personal development and cultural connection.

As the program continues to expand, it remains committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of young people and building stronger communities across Sydney.





Ballarat

Big Brothers Big Sisters Ballarat continues to make a significant impact through its one-on-one and group mentoring programs, providing essential support to young people in the community.

The Men2B program helped young participants build connections with themselves, each other, and their mentors. By the end of the program, participants reported improved communication, trust, and friendship, learning principles of respect and meaningful relationships with positive role models.

The small group mentoring program featured activities such as visits to the Eureka Centre, Sovereign Hill, Ten Pin Bowling, and the Art Gallery. These activities, tailored to participants' interests, deepened connections with their mentors while offering new experiences.

A highlight was the "Walk on Wadawurrung Country" during NAIDOC Week, led by Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Shannen Mennen. This cultural awareness activity gave participants and community members the chance to learn about Wadawurrung culture, customs, and the importance of caring for the country.

Fundraising and Events

Big Brothers Big Sisters Ballarat raised awareness and funds through various community events. The Dirty Pig and Whistle Gravel Bike Ride engaged local cycling enthusiasts while raising vital funds.

Additionally, a Bunnings BBQ provided an opportunity for volunteers to connect with the community and support the program.

The Special Lunch brought the community together with inspiring speeches, music, and food, highlighting the program's impact and fostering deeper connections with the community.

Looking Ahead

The program aims to expand its reach, building more meaningful mentor-mentee connections. One-on-one mentoring relationships, like **Des and Casey's** (pictured below) have shown the profound impact of mentorship. Casey's mother shared how her son lights up when he sees his mentor, underscoring the program's value.

With ongoing community support, Big Brothers Big Sisters Ballarat is poised to make an even greater difference in the lives of local young people.





Wangaratta

The Wangaratta program has become a cornerstone of the local community, providing essential support to young people and fostering strong connections.

Through the dedication of our team and Mentors, the program has cultivated a thriving environment where young people can navigate life's challenges with guidance and encouragement. The relationships between Mentors and Mentees continue to grow stronger, and the program's impact is felt throughout the community.

At the heart of the program's success is the outstanding leadership of our Mentoring Coordinator, who has a remarkable ability to connect with Mentees and create lasting, meaningful matches. This year, the addition of a new team member has further supported the program's growth, managing events and communication to ensure continued success.

Fundraising/Events

Community support is vital to the Wangaratta program's success, with strong backing from local organizations and businesses. Events, particularly the bi-monthly "Pub Chorus," have become central to fundraising efforts, drawing over 100 participants each time and raising essential funds.

The success of these events highlights strong community involvement, with local businesses ensuring the program's sustainability and capacity to support more young people each year.

Looking Ahead

Looking to the future, the Wangaratta program is poised for even greater success. We are committed to strengthening our community partnerships and expanding our outreach efforts. One example of the program's impact is a young person who, after struggling with school, re-engaged through a local education program with the persistent support of our team. They are now attending school regularly and thriving, with the positive guidance of their Mentor.

The program's ability to celebrate diversity and create authentic connections is another key factor in its success. Mentors and Mentees often connect over shared experiences, such as neurodiversity, fostering a deeper sense of understanding and belonging. These connections not only empower young people but also enrich the Mentors' experiences, making the program truly transformative.

One story that perfectly encapsulates the program's impact involves a young Mentee who wanted to paint her Mentor's face.

She explained, "I'm going to paint your face the way I see it," and proceeded to paint sunshine on her Mentor's face.

Moments like this capture the heart of what Big Brothers Big Sisters Wangaratta is all about—bringing light, hope, and joy to the lives of young people.

Our team also goes above and beyond to ensure the success of Mentor-Mentee relationships, sometimes attending case meetings to provide valuable insights and guidance. This proactive approach helps to strengthen the relationships, ensuring that Mentors feel equipped and supported in their roles.



Tumut, NSW

Big Brothers Big Sisters Tumut celebrated its second anniversary in July, marking impressive growth since its 2022 launch.

Initially aiming to secure funding for one additional year and establish five mentor-mentee matches, the program now supports 14 active matches, with more mentors in the screening process. While the target of 18 matches by year-end remains ambitious, the program is on track to achieve this milestone by Christmas.

Milestones and Regional Expansion

Efforts to expand into Gundagai, Adelong, and Batlow are progressing well, with recruitment drives and awareness campaigns engaging both mentors and mentees in these areas. Several young people and mentors from the region are currently in the screening process.

Fundraising Success

BBBS Tumut achieved a major milestone at Pitch Up Wagga Wagga, raising \$21,045, the highest amount of the evening. Other successful fundraisers include Pub Choir events, a Family Colour Run,

Paint and Sip nights, and a Business House Bowls Tournament. Additionally, a recycling program in partnership with JJ's Waste and Recycling now provides regular funding through fortnightly rebates.

Local Collaboration

Tumut has built strong partnerships with five local businesses, two of which have employees actively mentoring. These organisations also participate in local events, strengthening ties and supporting the program's growth.

Community engagement has been robust, with over 25 events, fundraisers, and presentations held throughout the region. Regular community radio segments and newspaper features have further amplified the program's message, fostering wider support.

Looking Ahead

Entering its third year, BBBS Tumut aims to recruit more mentors and mentees, especially in Gundagai, Adelong, and Batlow, to expand its reach. With strong community support, the program is well-positioned to transform even more young lives.



Young Achievers Program

2024 has been a remarkable year for the Young Achievers Program (YAP), with strong success across all aspects of the program. Both existing mentor-mentee matches and new matches have flourished, with participants showing enthusiasm and dedication in their engagements.

The year kicked off with a team-building overnight camp at The Summit, which set a positive tone for the year ahead. This camp allowed participants to bond, build trust, and form a strong sense of community, laying the groundwork for a successful year.

In addition to the camp, YAP has maintained its commitment to monthly workshops, offering valuable learning opportunities to participants. Workshops included an annual multicultural day, a volunteer experience at Space2B in

St Kilda, study skills sessions led by YAP alumni, and networking workshops. Engagement in these workshops has been exceptional, with over 80% attendance across the year. This high level of participation reflects the sense of community and support within the group, which continues to grow stronger each year.

Successes

One of the standout moments of 2024 was the Big Brothers Big Sisters Annual Dinner, which provided an exciting opportunity for Young Achievers, their mentors, and sponsors to come together. The night was a resounding success, with our participants playing a key role in the evening's activities. They actively participated in panel discussions, facilitated conversations, and expressed their gratitude to sponsors in speeches.



In addition, one of our talented Young Achievers showcased their skills by selling a piece of artwork in the silent auction, further highlighting the diverse talents within our group. This event not only celebrated the achievements of the Young Achievers but also contributed to raising funds to support the continued growth of the program.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward 2025, the Young Achievers Program is poised for even greater impact. This year has seen a significant increase in applications for the upcoming cohort, largely due to the strong partnerships we've built with schools across Metropolitan Melbourne and various community organisations. These partnerships have proven invaluable in expanding the program's reach and providing

more young people with the opportunity to participate.

Looking forward, we aim to continue strengthening these partnerships and increasing our program's impact. With continued success in our fundraising efforts and ongoing engagement from participants, mentors, and the broader community, we are confident that the Young Achievers Program will continue to empower and inspire the next generation of leaders in 2025 and beyond.

Support

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Philip and Vivien Brass, The Goodman Family Foundation, and all sponsors for their ongoing support of the Young Achievers Program (YAP).

Events

Big Brothers Big Sisters 2024 Events: A Year of Connection, Impact, and Celebration

Our events are more than just occasions on the calendar — they are an embodiment of our mission to inspire and empower young lives through mentorship.

This year, we proudly hosted three standout events that brought our community together and strengthened our ability to support young people across Australia: the AFL Final Series Luncheon, Bail Out Adelaide, and our Annual Dinner. Here's a look back at the incredible impact of these events.



Annual Dinner: Sparkle & Shine

This year's Annual Dinner was nothing short of magical. Held at the prestigious RACV City Club in the heart of Melbourne, the evening was a glittering celebration of the power of mentorship. With the theme "Sparkle & Shine," attendees embraced the spirit of the evening.

The program featured a lineup of exceptional talent, including renowned opera singer Antoinette Halloran accompanied by pianist Patrick Lawrence, and the ever-entertaining comedian and musician Sammy J.

Inspiring stories were shared from young people & their mentors, a poignant reminder of the transformative relationships we cultivate every day. The event included a silent and live auction, which added an extra layer of excitement while raising vital funds for our programs. Attendees enjoyed a two-course meal and drinks, surrounded by an atmosphere of hope and celebration.

While ticket sales and auction contributions helped generate funds, the evening's true success lay in its ability to bring our community together—to honor the journeys of our mentees and mentors, and to inspire others to join us in making a difference.



AFL Final Series Luncheon

Held at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), the AFL Final Series Luncheon brought together 400 supporters in partnership with the Indigenous Plumbing and Sanitation Foundation. The event combined expert commentary on the AFL Finals with a focus on supporting vital causes, including Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The luncheon was filled with energy, featuring engaging speakers, entertainment, and stories of impact. The event raised \$70,000, providing crucial funding for our mentoring programs. Beyond the financial success, it reinforced connections within our community and deepened our collective commitment to shaping brighter futures for young Australians.

Bail Out Adelaide: Breaking the Chains of Loneliness

This year's Bail Out Adelaide fundraiser was an unforgettable and impactful experience. Participants took part in a unique simulation that immersed them in the stark realities of incarceration. From mock interrogations to time spent in a simulated "lock-up," the event served as a powerful reminder of the challenges faced by many young Australians who feel isolated or unsupported.

The event's success was a testament to the dedication of our Board Members, particularly Bernie Glaser, Cindy Hynes, and Darryn Keneally, who not only championed the cause but also inspired others to do the same. Their commitment, alongside the efforts of all our participants, helped raise just over \$36,880.

Bail Out isn't just about fundraising—it's about igniting empathy and encouraging action. The funds raised will directly support programs that combat loneliness and provide meaningful mentorship opportunities for young people, ensuring they feel seen, heard, and valued. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this incredible event.





A Year of Transformation

Our signature events were complemented by regional initiatives that added depth and richness to our work, elevating awareness of our mission to break the cycle of disadvantage through mentorship.

The Larapinta Trek in outback Australia saw participants embark on a challenging journey through breathtaking landscapes. Other standout events like the Dirty Pig and Whistle Gravel Bike Ride, Tumut Pub Choir, and Wangaratta Aquathon demonstrated the creativity and dedication of our regional supporters.

Thanks to the overwhelming success of these events, many are already locked into our 2025 calendar, ensuring a strong foundation for continued engagement, fundraising, and impact in the year ahead. Together, we are building brighter futures for young Australians, one mentoring relationship at a time.

Thank you to everyone who attended, supported, and believed in our mission this year. Together, we are building brighter futures for young Australians, one mentoring relationship at a time.

Here's to
another year
of connection,
celebration,
and impact!





Shaping Young Lives /

\$1.293m



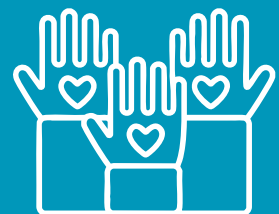
In support from donors who believe in our program

11,004



Engaged subscribers & followers supporting us in our event and fundraising efforts.

3,092



Volunteer enquiries expressing interest in the program



Partnerships

Expanding Impact Through Partnership with Stride Education

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Australia continues to strengthen its impact through partnerships, particularly with Stride Education. This collaboration enhances our holistic approach to youth development, integrating BBBS's long-term one-to-one mentoring with Stride's evidence-based well-being workshops. Together, we have delivered meaningful outcomes for students in Victoria and New South Wales.

The Tumut Supportive Friends Mentoring Program

Funded by the NSW Department of Education, this program at Tumut High School equips young people with tools to foster resilience, build positive relationships, and enhance emotional well-being. It combines:

- **Well-being Workshops:** Led by Stride, these sessions focus on social-emotional learning and self-care.
- **Mentoring Relationships:** Students are paired with adult mentors who offer long-term support and guidance.

This approach empowers students to build healthier relationships with themselves and their communities.

Cranbourne Secondary College: A Proven Model

In early 2024, BBBS and Stride collaborated on another successful initiative at Cranbourne Secondary College, funded by the Freemasons Foundation. This program reinforced the impact of combining mentoring with well-being education to address students' social and emotional challenges.

Key Outcomes

Both programs have shown significant results, including:

- Improved emotional resilience and self-care.
- Stronger peer connections and a greater sense of belonging.
- Increased confidence in building positive relationships.
- Empowered students contributing positively to their communities.

A Scalable Vision

Together, we are committed to expanding these scalable models, adapting them to diverse communities to support young people across Australia. We're shaping brighter futures, one mentoring relationship at a time.



Short Statured People of Australia

Our partnership is based on shared values and goals. It is tailored to meet both organisation's needs and objectives, for young people and their mentors.

Working together we provide:

- Full training for mentoring coordinators
- Volunteer mentors group training
- Online mentoring platform – OurSpace
- Professional advice and ongoing support
- A central Client Relationship Management system (CRM)
- Shared research and evaluation
- Best practice – policies and procedures
- Marketing support
- Highest standard of national child safety and wellbeing

SSPA seeks to empower, assist and represent people of short stature, to enable individuals to assert their right to live in, participate in and be productive members of the community, and by so doing, maximise their potential as valued citizens.

Big Brothers Big Sisters supports the aims of SSPA including: Awareness, Education, Psycho Social & Communication.

Collective Impact

Collective Impact is a social enterprise rooted in the belief that the right connections—whether between individuals or organisations—can unlock transformative opportunities for all. By focusing on values-driven businesses, both employees and employers benefit from a shared commitment to social good and long-term success. How people buy matters just as much as what they buy.

One of the key components of Collective Impact's model is its purpose-built factory in South Dandenong, Victoria. This facility serves as both a training ground and a springboard, providing young people with the chance to develop hands-on skills in a real-world environment.

By fostering supportive environments and flexible systems, Collective Impact helps young adults build the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to thrive in both their personal and professional lives.





Stories Shaping Young Lives /

MENTEE MENTOR Angus & Alan

Angus is 14 years old and was referred to the program as his father passed away very suddenly in front of Angus, from a heart attack.

As you can imagine, Angus was very traumatised by the event. Angus really needed more “boy-time” and it was hoped that in time, Angus would open up and discuss his emotions with the mentor.

Angus was matched with Alan in October 2022 and are now approaching 2 years of friendship! Angus found not only a mentor in Alan, but also a friend and role model. Their journey together fostered a strong

bond built on trust and shared interests.

This positive experience led to a noticeable improvement in Angus’s confidence and communication skills, as observed by his mother, Marnie.. Angus has really opened up to Alan along the years and is now much better at speaking about and managing his emotions.

Angus and Alan are excited to continue catching up and hanging out together for many years to come.



Stories Shaping Young Lives /

Kate and Mya met through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Kate is a mentor, and according to Mya, the mentee, Kate's positive attitude helped her step out of her comfort zone.

They meet every Sunday and engage in activities suggested by Kate, while Kate also involves Mya in decision-making.

Kate is optimistic about their relationship and sees Mya gradually opening up to her. Both Kate and Mya are even excited about the possibility of going on overnight trips, such as camping.

During their time together, from Kate's perspective, she noticed that Mya has become more comfortable expressing her emotions. Mya consistently shows gratitude

MENTEE MENTOR Mya & Kate

and politeness towards Kate. Their warm relationship extends to Mya's family, who appreciates Kate's involvement.

In addition, both Kate and Mya appreciate the support they receive from the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. They look forward to participating in events organized by the program.

In the next few months, Kate plans to spend more time with Mya, exploring activities that can enhance her social life and provide additional benefits. Last but not least, Mya describes Kate as a sister she never imagined having.



Stories Shaping Young Lives /

MENTEE

MENTOR

Jackson & Brad

“

I really like that Brad is teaching me to drive.

Brad doesn't pressure me and offers me options about how I can make a decision, or a choice and I really like that.

The match is going well, it gets me out of my comfort zone and I'm learning a lot"

- Jackson

“

"I've recently started to see a change, Jackson has started taking an interest in my life and my family and asking me questions.

One the weekend we went ten pin bowling Jackson chatted the whole time and asked me heaps of questions it was like hanging out with a mate" I didn't think a few months back we would ever get to this point. I am so thrilled, we have come a long way!"

- Brad

Leadership

Leadership and Collaboration for Sustainability

The success of Big Brothers Big Sisters is built on the invaluable support of leaders and groups who believe in empowering young people. Two key contributors, The Leadership Council and The Uncommon Experiences Group, exemplify this commitment to creating lasting change.

The Leadership Council, a group of business and community leaders, drives impactful youth initiatives and mental health programs. Their focus on fostering independence, well-being, and entrepreneurship empowers young Australians to explore creative paths and build skills for a sustainable future.

The Uncommon Experiences Group has revolutionised networking by fostering genuine, meaningful relationships. Their innovative approach strengthens our collaboration and *enhances the impact of programs like the Change Makers Club, ensuring we remain connected and inspired.*

We are deeply grateful for their wisdom, time, and unwavering support in helping us create a brighter future for young Australians. Together, we are building pathways for resilience, connection, and success.

Launching the Change Makers Club

In 2024, we proudly launched the Change Makers Club, inviting supporters who are passionate about making a lasting difference in the lives of young people.

Being a member of the Change Makers Club is more than just making a donation—it's about becoming part of a vibrant community dedicated to empowering young people. Members receive regular updates on the impact of their contributions, exclusive invitations to events, and the incredible satisfaction of knowing they are creating life-changing opportunities.

The Change Makers Club offers four levels of impact:

- **The Change a Community Club:** \$1200/month funds programs that create a ripple effect, transforming not only the life of a young person but also their entire community.
- **The Change a Life Club:** \$300/month provides a child or young person with a life-changing mentor, supporting them to build confidence, resilience, and a brighter future.
- **The Change a Year Club:** \$48/month sets the foundation for a year of growth and transformation, pairing a young person with a mentor who will guide and support them.
- **The Change a Month Club:** \$12/month sparks new beginnings for a child, enabling them to meet their mentor and begin their journey with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The Change Makers Club is helping transform lives and build stronger communities through its generous contributions.



Join the
Change
Makers
Club



Our Incredible Team

What makes the Big Brothers Big Sisters team extraordinary is our unwavering commitment to transforming the lives of young people. Across the country from Melbourne, Ballarat, Wangaratta, Sydney to Tumut, NSW our passionate team members live and breathe our mission daily.



Did you know that we don't just make amazing mentoring matches?

We also nurture future changemakers by supporting social work students, some of whom are so exceptional they stay on to become valued team members. We are equally dedicated to empowering volunteers, including refugees, by helping them build pathways to future employment.

Alongside providing life-changing mentoring, supervision, and support, our team addresses significant challenges faced by young people and families. Beyond these core activities, we actively engage in local events, raising awareness and funds to expand our impact. This dynamic blend of dedication, empowerment, and community engagement makes our team a force for good, ensuring every young person has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your passion, dedication, and tireless work to empower young people and create brighter futures.

The Team

Mark Watt AM	Caz Sammon
Tania Hutchison	Bec Langham
Diana Ginger	Amy Little
Jodie Dowey	Jay Tobin
Belinda Chandler	Ashleigh Gibson
Ya Ker Pa	Cheryne Blom
Emma Peacock	Vincent Lucas



“Working with BBBS was truly inspiring. It’s amazing to see the incredible difference BBBS makes in the community, and being part of such a supportive team taught me so much. I’ll carry those lessons with me forever” - Zulfa Soltani

Ambassadors

We thank our Ambassadors, passionate individuals dedicated to spreading awareness and empowering others to create meaningful change.



Sammy J –
Comedian Entertainer



Emily Matthews –
Youth Ambassador



Warren Hill –
Account Director,
Appscore



Jordy Lucas –
Founder,
She Does This



We are grateful to our supporters for their unwavering dedication to making a difference in the community. Their commitment is essential in helping us advance our mission and create a lasting impact.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Australia