

Annual Report 2024-2025



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Australia

“

I know I say this every week, but honestly, this is just the best thing ever. Hanging out with Jesse brings me so much joy!”

Jess (Mentor)



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Chairman's Report



This year has been one of consolidation, growth, and strengthened direction for Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia.

I extend my sincere thanks to our mentors, staff, supporters, and partners whose commitment ensures we continue to deliver safe, high-quality mentoring to young people across our communities.

Our volunteer mentors remain central to our impact, providing consistent guidance, stability, and positive connection. To our mentees, your resilience and willingness to engage drive the purpose of our work.

We also recognise the vital role of our sponsors, funders, and community partners. Their investment has enabled program expansion across new regions and supported collaborative initiatives addressing youth crime, family violence, and social isolation.

I would like to acknowledge the Board Members—Kingsley Munday AM (outgoing), Darryn Keneally OAM, Cindy Hynes, and Andrew

Kay—for their leadership and strategic oversight. Thank you also to CEO Mark Watt AM and Operations Manager Tania Hutchison, whose steady leadership has guided the organisation through a period of significant operational development while maintaining the highest child-safety standards.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on strengthening long-term mentoring outcomes, deepening partnerships, and ensuring the organisation is positioned for sustainable growth. Our work continues to play a critical role in supporting young people to thrive and realise their potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernie Glaser'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bernie Glaser

Chairperson

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia

From The CEO



I am incredibly proud of the dedication and professionalism shown by our staff and volunteer mentors throughout the year.

Across every program and region, our team has continued to deliver high-quality, evidence-based mentoring while strengthening the foundations that support long-term sustainability.

Our major events once again played a crucial role in elevating our work and engaging new supporters. Our Annual Dinner, an AFL and NRL Luncheon, Bail Out Challenge in four locations, and Larapinta Trek all delivered outstanding results—both in fundraising and in strengthening community awareness of our mission. These events are now firmly embedded in our annual calendar as key drivers of impact and connection.

This year we also advanced several strategic initiatives designed to deepen engagement and ensure financial sustainability. The Change Makers Club continued to grow, providing ongoing support for our mentoring programs and building a committed community of advocates. Alongside this, we strengthened program quality through improvements to evaluation, data collection, and child safety practice, ensuring we remain at the forefront of evidence-based youth support.

Our volunteer mentors continue to be the backbone of this organisation. Their willingness to

provide consistent, positive relationships for young people facing significant challenges is what makes our work possible. To the young people and families who trust us with their stories and their journeys—thank you.

We are also grateful for the continued support of our corporate partners, donors, and community organisations. Your investment enables us to respond to emerging needs and expand our reach into communities where mentoring can have the greatest impact. In 2025, we commenced planning for program growth into the Snowy Mountains region and Perth, Western Australia—two communities where we see strong local demand and significant opportunity.

As we look ahead to 2026, our focus remains clear: strengthen our programs, grow our reach, and create more opportunities for young people to feel connected, supported, and empowered. Together, we are building pathways that help young people thrive.

Mark Watt AM

Chief Executive Officer

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia



About Us.

At Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia, we believe in the transformative power of mentoring to change lives — breaking cycles of disadvantage & helping young people unlock their full potential.

For more than 25 years, we have delivered long-term, evidence-based mentoring programs that connect young people with positive adult role models who provide guidance, stability, and encouragement.

Each mentoring relationship helps build resilience, confidence, and hope — creating a ripple effect that strengthens families and communities.

Our commitment to building brighter futures is grounded in over a century of international expertise, making Big Brothers Big Sisters one of the most trusted and impactful mentoring organisations in the world.

We are unwavering in our dedication to the safety, wellbeing, participation, and empowerment of all children and young people, maintaining a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse. We are also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and young people with disabilities — ensuring every child feels valued, respected, and safe.



Our Mission.

Building Connections, Inspiring Potential

Our mission is to change the lives of young people through the power of mentoring.

We support children and young people aged 7–17 by carefully matching them with screened and trained volunteer mentors who serve as consistent, positive role models. Through regular one-on-one catch-ups — just 1–2 hours a week for at least 12 months — these mentors help young people build confidence, strengthen resilience, and develop a sense of belonging and purpose.

In 2025, our programs have continued to grow across metropolitan, regional, and remote communities, responding to the increasing need for early intervention and preventative support. Mentors are providing stability and encouragement to young people experiencing challenges such as family violence, social isolation, or disengagement from school — helping them find hope and direction for the future.

These relationships fill a vital gap in the lives of young people and extend their impact beyond the individual — strengthening families, schools, and communities, and contributing to safer, more connected societies.

The Challenge.

Addressing Childhood Maltreatment & Adversity

Childhood adversity remains one of Australia's most pressing social challenges. The Australian Child Maltreatment Study found that nearly two in three Australians experienced at least one form of maltreatment during childhood — including exposure to family violence, emotional abuse, neglect, or other trauma.

These experiences can leave deep and lasting impacts on a young person's wellbeing, sense of safety, and connection to education or community. Without stable, positive relationships, many young people struggle to recover from these early challenges.

It is within this context that Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia operates — providing a vital early intervention and preventative approach that helps young people heal, grow, and thrive through the power of long-term, trusted mentoring relationships.

**62% of Australians
experienced at
least one form
of childhood
maltreatment.¹**

¹Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 2023



Our Approach. A Long-Term, Evidence-Based Approach

What sets Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia apart is our unwavering commitment to long-term mentoring relationships that create lasting change.

Our approach is grounded in international best practice and decades of evidence-based research, ensuring that young people receive consistent, sustained support during the most critical periods of their development. Mentors provide encouragement, stability, and guidance — helping young people strengthen their identity, confidence, and sense of belonging.

Independent evaluations continue to demonstrate the impact of our model: mentored young people experience higher self-esteem, improved relationships, and stronger engagement in education and employment. These outcomes highlight the power of mentoring as a proven tool for breaking cycles of disadvantage and unlocking potential.

Our History and Reach

Over the past five years, Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia has continued to grow and expand our reach.

From the Melbourne western corridor through to Ballarat, expanding north into Sydney's western suburbs, and strengthening regional programs in Wangaratta and surrounding areas.

Our success in Tumut, New South Wales, has paved the way for a new regional focus, with plans underway to extend mentoring across the Snowy Valleys region in 2025.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to expand across the country to Perth, Western Australia — marking a major milestone in our mission to ensure every young person has access to a trusted adult mentor, no matter where they live.

Our Growth Journey

2021-2022

Maintaining and strengthening core programs in Melbourne and Ballarat, continuing to build strong community foundations and partnerships.

2023

Expanding through Melbourne's western corridor, reaching new communities across the Dandenong Ranges (Monbulk) and south-eastern suburbs including Cranbourne.

2024

Growing our presence in Sydney's western suburbs and deepening regional impact in Wangaratta and Tumut.

2025-2026

Extending our reach into the Snowy Valleys region and expanding across the country to Perth, Western Australia — marking a major milestone in our national growth.





Every week is an adventure with Jesse! From skate parks to fishing trips, gold panning to scooter tricks — there’s never a dull moment.

At the skate park, Jesse worked so hard to land a tail whip. After a few tries (and Jess filming his attempts), he nailed it! The smile on his face said it all.

Fishing has been full of laughs — shrimp nets, bites that got away, and Jesse’s first ever yellow belly! He was so proud he ran to show everyone nearby and even called a mate to share the news.

Gold panning was another highlight. Jesse found tiny specks of gold and couldn’t stop grinning. Even better, he messaged first to organise the outing — proof he’s loving their time together.

Jesse makes friends everywhere they go. Whether it’s helping strangers bait hooks, learning knots from fellow fishers, or proudly introducing Jess as “his friend,” he’s growing in confidence every week.

Jess says: “I know I say this every week, but honestly, this is just the best thing ever. Hanging out with Jesse brings me so much joy!”



Jess & Jesse

Why Our Work Is Critical.

Suicide is the leading cause of death for young Australians aged

15-24¹

23,810

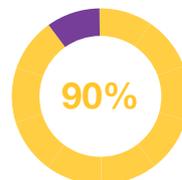
offences (alleged) by children aged 10-17 in Victoria, the highest since 2009³



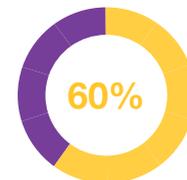
Children as young as 10 are committing crimes at record levels²

845

young Australians were in detention on an average night in the June quarter 2024. Of these,



Male



First Nations

In Australia, it costs an average

\$3,365 A DAY

to keep a young person in youth detention.⁴



The cost for Big Brothers Big Sisters to mentor a vulnerable young person over 12-months

\$9.78 A DAY



Source:

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/population-groups/young-people>

² <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/media-centre/news/key-figures-year-ending-september-2024>

³ <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/media-centre/news/key-figures-year-ending-september-2024>

⁴ <https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2025/community-services/youth-justice/>, Table 17A.20

The Need.

Young Person Profile

31%

FAMILY DRIVEN

Mental Health, domestic violence caused issues



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



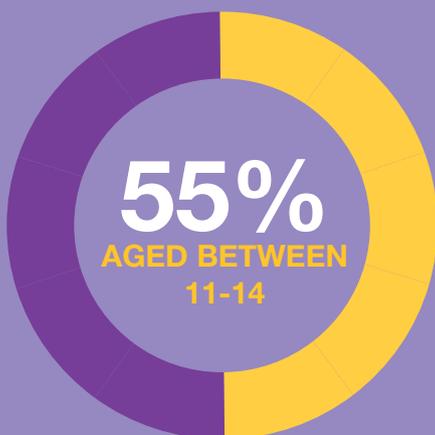
31%

MENTAL HEALTH

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



Gender & Age Profile



32% Female

66.5% Male

1.5% Non-binary

Our Impact on a Global Scale

\$1 invested in mentoring by Big Brothers Big Sisters Internationally

returns \$18 to economically disadvantaged groups.¹

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%

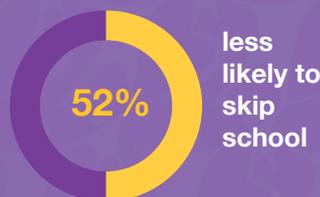
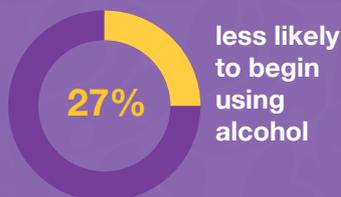
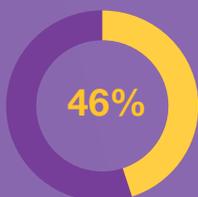
have post-secondary education¹



87%

have strong networks of family & friends¹

Young people who had a volunteer mentor in their life were:



Australian Mentoring Impact Evaluation



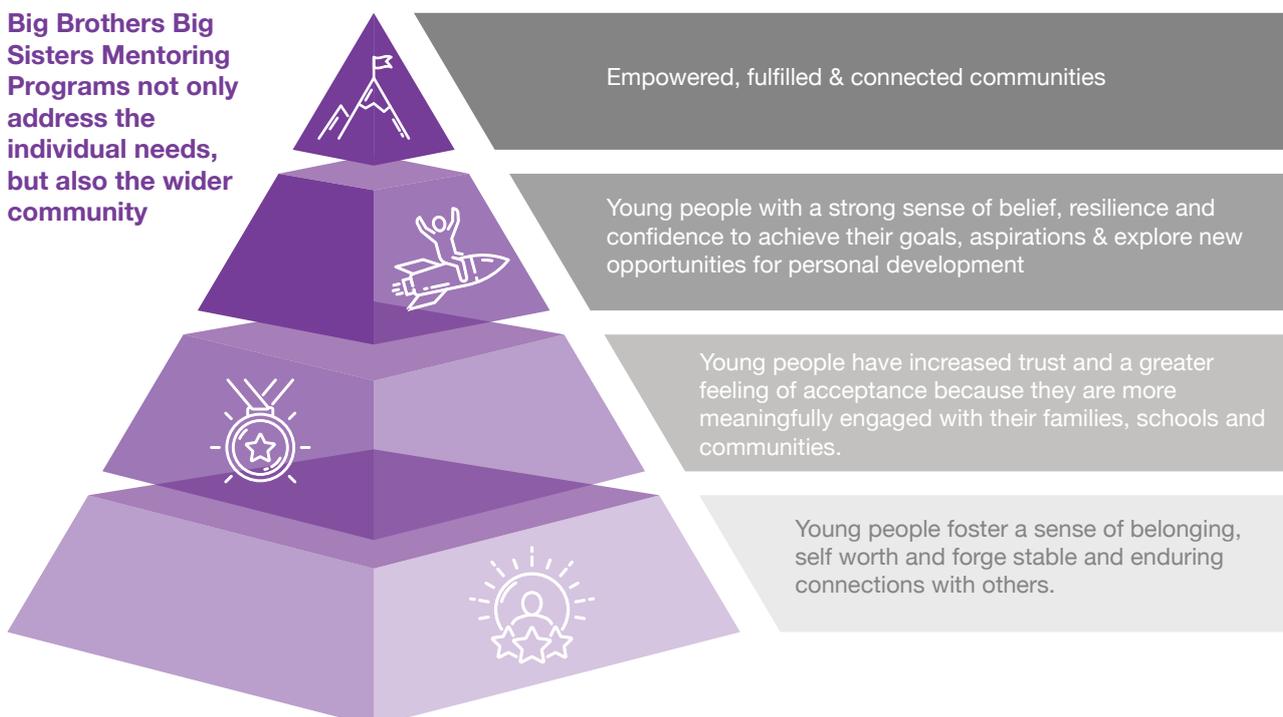
Mark & Jaxxon

While international studies from Canada, New Zealand and the United States have long demonstrated the impact of youth mentoring, credible Australian data has been limited.

Through our strengthened long-term evaluation framework, we are now beginning to capture early insights that reflect the unique experiences of young people in our programs. These emerging findings offer an important contribution to the evidence base for mentoring in Australia and reinforce the value of sustained, one-to-one relationships.

Theory of Change

Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Programs not only address the individual needs, but also the wider community

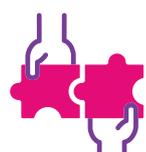


Early Results from Our Australian Evaluation



Belonging - Social Inclusion and Connection

Out of 38 participants, 23 young people (61%) reported that their mentor helped them feel like they fit in at school and/or in the community.



Future Goals –Sense of Purpose and Pathway Planning

Out of 38 participants, 31 young people (82%) said their mentor helped them think about what they want to do in the future.

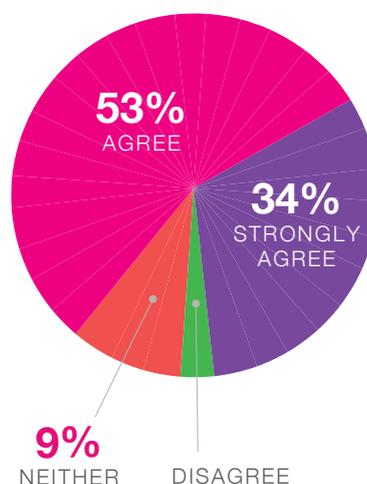


Connection – Relationships & Support Networks

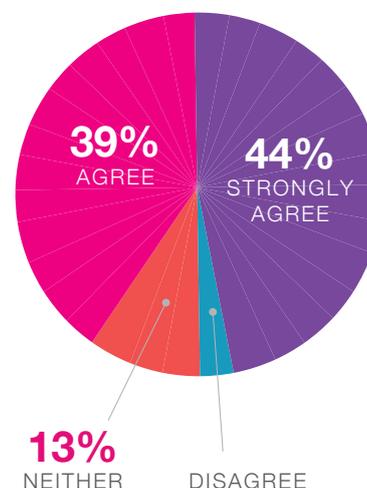
Out of 38 participants, 28 young people (74%) said their mentor helped them connect better with friends and family.

Self-Confidence - Confidence & Resilience

Midway - Out of 52 participants, 46 young people (88%) answered that their mentor has helped them increase their self confidence at school and/or in the community (Rating 4 or 5)



At Graduation - Out of 38 participants, 32 young people (84%) reported that their mentor helped increase their self-confidence at school and/or in the community.



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

Big Brothers Big Sisters' model takes a community-based and preventative approach to supporting young people, their families, and broader networks. Through the provision of positive adult role models, our programs equip young people with practical skills to manage challenges, build resilience, and enhance their mental health and wellbeing.

Our focus on early, preventative intervention—particularly at the 'coping' and 'struggling' stages of the wellbeing continuum—aims to strengthen functioning before a young person becomes unwell.

This approach is strongly aligned with the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is consistent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of social and emotional wellbeing, which emphasise holistic, strengths-based health rather than an illness-only focus.

By intervening early, we help young people maintain positive wellbeing ('healthy') and reduce the likelihood of escalation to more acute levels of need ('unwell'). These benefits are reflected in the outcomes summarised in the table below.



Source:

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

Our Programs



Brax & Oscar

Highlights Melbourne

Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to strengthen its footprint across Melbourne through three distinct regional mentoring initiatives – in the western suburbs, south-eastern region, and the Hills – each responding to local community needs and building safer, more connected futures for young people.

In **Melbourne's western suburbs**, the Westside Rise Project addresses the high rates of family violence, school disengagement, and social isolation in areas such as Wyndham and Melton. With more than 160 young people currently on the waitlist in the west alone, the demand for long-term mentoring continues to grow. Through strong local partnerships with churches, schools such as Copperfield College, and community organisations including Charis Mentoring and the COACH Network, the program provides consistent, one-to-one support that helps young people heal from trauma, build resilience, and reconnect with education. Across the Westside Rise Project, over 98 young people and families have received mentoring or wrap-around support, with 40 trained volunteer mentors delivering thousands of hours of positive connection. Outcomes include stronger family relationships, reduced anti-social behaviour, and increased confidence, particularly among Pasifika young people who are over-represented in the youth justice system.

In the **south-eastern suburbs**, the mentoring program in Cranbourne has become a valued community resource supporting young people and families experiencing vulnerability. Through partnerships with Cranbourne Secondary College and local organisations such as Frankston and Dandenong-Cranbourne RSLs, Casey Demons Football Club, and The Men's Table, the project has built strong community ties and expanded its volunteer base. Mentoring has provided vital support for school refusers and young people from complex family situations, improving engagement, wellbeing, and self-esteem.

The Supportive Friends workshops with Stride Education have also enhanced digital literacy, empathy, and social skills, helping students make healthier choices and build meaningful friendships.

In **the Hills region**, Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to collaborate closely with Monbulk Secondary College, providing mentoring opportunities for local young people and maintaining strong engagement with the community steering committee. This grassroots approach ensures young people in smaller regional pockets are not left behind, offering consistent support that strengthens confidence, belonging, and educational engagement.

Together, these Melbourne programs highlight the organisation's commitment to early intervention, long-term connection, and community-led mentoring.



Scott & Jack



Highlights Sydney

Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to grow across Sydney, with programs operating in both the Cumberland region and South Sydney.

In western Sydney, the community-based program has expanded from three to twelve active matches, each providing consistent, one-to-one mentoring for young people aged 10–17. Supported by families, local schools, and community partners, mentors are helping young people strengthen confidence, improve wellbeing, and stay connected to education and community life.

In **South Sydney**, Big Brothers Big Sisters is partnering with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) through the Short-Term Remand Pilot, which supports young people at risk of, or already in contact with, the justice system. The program focuses on early intervention and reducing avoidable short-term remand by providing stable, trusted relationships with trained mentors.

Together, these programs are demonstrating the power of long-term mentoring to create safer, stronger, and more connected communities across Sydney.



Doug & Jamie



Highlights Ballarat

The Ballarat program has continued to thrive, with new matches forming and exciting activities underway.

Luna and Mark, our newest match, are meeting weekly and preparing for the upcoming Billy Cart workshops, while Addi and Alex, who were matched in early September, are enjoying getting out and exploring the lake and Victoria Park together. Four new mentors are currently progressing through screening and training, reflecting the strong community interest in being part of the program.

We launched our Safe Futures Mentoring workshops in collaboration with Stride Education in October at Ballarat High School to empower young people to step into peer mentoring roles in their community. Following on from that in 2026 a small group active mentoring program will assist students to further enhance their leadership and hold space for young people who need support.

Fundraising and community support have been a major focus in 2025. The “Breaking the Cycle” end-of-financial-year campaign raised over \$26,500, thanks to the generous contributions of Don and Jill McKenzie, Ballarat’s Biggest Ever Blokes Lunch, Mark and Carolyn Guirguis, and the Buninyong and Mt Helen Lions Club. Ballarat also took part in Bail Out Adelaide, raising \$1,600 for local programs, with planning already underway for Bail Out Ballarat 2026 to further strengthen local funding.

We continue to build sustainable partnerships through grants, memberships, donations, and fundraising events. Engaging with community leaders and partnering with organisations like Ballarat Wildlife Park and Hop Temple help to support young people and raise funds.

Brad & Jackson



Jesse & Jess



Highlights Wangaratta

The Wangaratta program has continued to flourish this year through strong local leadership and remarkable community support.

The program continues to build meaningful mentoring relationships that are helping young people feel connected, supported, and confident about their future.

Community collaboration remains at the heart of the program's success. The team is deeply grateful for the ongoing backing of the Rural City of Wangaratta, Wangaratta RSL, Project 365, Give Wangaratta, Garry Nash & Co Community Fund, Glenrowan Solar Farm, Into Our Hands Foundation, North East Homemakers Centre, My Slice of Life and Amadeus Brand, whose contributions have been vital in expanding mentoring opportunities across the region.

In 2025, the program proudly participated in Project 365, contributing to its annual event with a \$10,000 fundraising outcome and featuring both on stage and in radio interviews to share the impact of mentoring locally. Additional community-led initiatives — including Pub Chorus, supported by Project 365, and a Trivia Night hosted by Gillian and Peter Leonard — further strengthened awareness and local engagement.

These partnerships and events reflect the deep community ownership that defines the Wangaratta program. With growing volunteer interest and ongoing school and service collaborations, the team is focused on creating more mentoring matches and continuing to provide a safe, trusted environment for young people to thrive.



Jye & Hunter

Highlights Tumut

The Tumut program has had a milestone year, celebrating its third anniversary and marking significant growth across the Snowy Valleys region, including Gundagai, Adelong, and Batlow.

To date, 31 young people have been matched with mentors, with 14 more waiting to be paired. Each match represents a powerful step towards building confidence, connection, and opportunity for young people in rural communities.

The program's success has been made possible through strong local support and creative community engagement. Highlights include the first-ever regional Bail Out event at Old Gundagai Gaol, which raised \$28,000, and Tumut Takes 2, where local duo Jess and Laura performed to a sold-out theatre audience, raising \$14,333 — enough to support four new matches.

The program was also named a finalist for Outstanding Community Organisation at the Snowy Valleys Business Awards, reflecting its growing recognition across the region.

Local businesses continue to play an active role, with sponsors such as Snowy Hydro, A. Murray & Sons, and Roddy Engineering not only funding the program but also encouraging staff to become mentors themselves. Their involvement has helped deepen community connection and promote corporate volunteering as a way to give back.

Looking ahead, BBBS Tumut is planning 12 new matches in 2026, alongside new fundraising initiatives, including another Bail Out Gundagai and a Black-Tie Gala, to ensure continued growth and sustainability. With increasing community momentum and heartfelt local commitment, the Tumut program is proving that small regional towns can create big change through mentoring.



She's so much brighter when she comes home — she just radiates joy.

When Jenni met Lilly, the connection was instant. Within minutes of their first meeting, they were laughing and chatting as if they'd known each other for years. In just three months, their outings have included everything from making giant freckles at the Junee Liquorice Factory to washing Jenni's dogs at the car wash — simple moments that have become treasured memories.

Lilly's mum shared how much happier her daughter has become since being matched: "She's so much brighter when she comes home — she just radiates joy." For Jenni, the experience has been equally rewarding: "She's like the daughter I never had." This friendship reflects what BBBS Tumut is all about — creating genuine, lasting connections that help young people feel seen, valued, and hopeful about their future.

Young Achiever's Program provides a unique pathway for young people transitioning from mentoring into leadership & community participation.





The Young Achiever's Program (YAP) builds on the foundations of Big Brothers Big Sisters' long-term mentoring relationships, offering graduates the opportunity to strengthen confidence, develop professional and social skills, and give back to their community.

The year began with the annual camp at YMCA Lady Northcote Discovery Camp, where participants took part in team-building activities, explored the outdoors, and connected through shared experiences. The camp continues to be an essential starting point for each new cohort, helping participants form lasting friendships and a strong sense of belonging.

Throughout the year, workshops have encouraged participants to explore leadership, social impact, and entrepreneurship. The integration of the Stride Adaptor Project challenged young people to identify community needs and design social enterprise ideas in response — sparking meaningful discussions about how they can contribute to positive change.

A highlight of 2025 was the Big Brothers Big Sisters Annual Dinner, where Young Achievers

played a major role in the evening's success. Bill, Roman, and Riitta showcased their musical talents, while Santi impressed as master of ceremonies, demonstrating remarkable confidence and public speaking ability. Alumni also joined the event to share their stories, reflecting on how the program helped shape their journey from mentee to mentor, and now to active community leaders.

As the year closes, applications for 2026 are open, inviting a new group of young people to join this inspiring program and continue the legacy of leadership, creativity, and empowerment that defines the Young Achievers.

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.





Events & Engagement Highlights 2025

This year was defined by connection, leadership, and community spirit.

From unforgettable evenings of inspiration to bold fundraising challenges, every event helped raise vital funds and awareness for Big Brothers Big Sisters — while celebrating the people and partnerships that make our mission possible.



Golfing for Good kicked off the year in March, bringing together supporters at Cheltenham Golf Club for a fun-filled day on the green. Players combined friendly competition with purpose, raising funds to support life-changing mentoring programs and strengthening ties within our community of supporters.

In April, our **Annual Dinner** united mentors, mentees, and partners for a night of reflection and celebration. Guests were moved by heartfelt stories from young people and mentors, and inspired by the next generation of leaders from the Young Achievers Program who took to the stage to share their talents and experiences.



The **Ballarat Marathon** in April saw runners of all ages take on the challenge, proudly representing Big Brothers Big Sisters and raising awareness for youth mentoring in regional Victoria. Each kilometre run symbolised the strength and persistence that mentors and mentees bring to their journeys together.

In May, our signature **Bail Out** events in Melbourne, Adelaide and Gundagai delivered powerful and immersive experiences that asked participants to “step into the shoes” of young people in detention. From the iconic setting of Pentridge Prison to the historic Old Gundagai Gaol, participants were “locked up” to raise funds and awareness about

June brought a truly unforgettable evening of leadership and reflection, as we welcomed **Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka of the Republic of Fiji** for an intimate conversation on leadership, legacy, and resilience. Guided by the insightful Jason Bennett, and made possible through the support of Don Fleming, Darryn Keneally OAM, and Bernie Glaser, the event offered rare insight into global leadership and personal growth, leaving guests deeply moved and inspired.

In July, adventure met purpose with the **Larapinta Trek** — a five-day journey through the heart of Australia’s Red Centre. Despite challenging conditions, participants pushed through with determination and raised essential funds to support mentoring across Australia.





Finally, the year's momentum continued with our **AFL Luncheon** at the MCG in August, hosted by Russell "Robbo" Robertson and Sharni Norder, with comedy from Danny McGinlay. We were also excited to deliver our first **NRL Grand Final Luncheon** on Sydney. A huge success with guests enjoying a star-studded panel, great food, and plenty of laughter — all while raising funds to support Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Indigenous Plumbing & Sanitation Foundation.

Across every event, one theme stood out: the incredible generosity and enthusiasm of our community. From boardrooms to gaols, mountain trails to the MCG, people came together to make a difference — proving that when we unite for a common cause, the results are truly life-changing.





Shaping Young Lives

\$619,615



in support from donors and foundations who believe in our program

25,652



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

905



Volunteer enquiries expressing interest in the program

Partnerships

Expanding Impact Through Strategic Collaboration

To strengthen outcomes for young people and families, we continue to build partnerships that address a wide range of challenges — including justice involvement, cultural disconnection, wellbeing pressures, family stress, and barriers to education and employment.

These collaborations expand our reach, enhance cultural safety and ensure young people receive coordinated, responsive support.

Charis Youth and Community – Reniu Pasifika Program

In collaboration with Charis Youth and Community, the Reniu Pasifika Program provides culturally grounded mentoring for Pasifika young people aged 12–18 engaged in the Youth Justice system.

Funded by the Victorian Department of Justice, this initiative is guided by the Tautai Ecological Model and focuses on strengthening cultural identity, belonging and connection to family and community. The program includes one-to-one mentoring, pro-social group activities and a structured 10-week Culture and Identity curriculum for young people on supervised bail, parole, youth diversion and community-based orders.





Stride Education – In School Wellbeing and Leadership Workshops

Our partnership with Stride Education enhances wellbeing and communication support for young people through the delivery of Non-Violent Communication workshops and related programs. These initiatives address emotional distress, family pressures, disrupted school engagement and interpersonal conflict.

Stride's expertise in wellbeing education, combined with ongoing mentoring support, helps young people build emotional literacy, strengthen relationships and engage more confidently in school and community life.

Collective Impact Group – Social Enterprise Pathways

Collective Impact Group is a purpose-driven social enterprise specialising in ethical marketing, design, print and distribution. From its purpose-built facility in Dandenong South, the organisation provides secure employment, workplace training and mentoring for disadvantaged young people and refugees.

Profits from the enterprise are reinvested into youth development initiatives, creating practical pathways to skill-building and long-term employment. This partnership broadens access to economic participation and supports young people to build confidence, capability and independence.



Stories Shaping Young Lives Noah & Anton

Noah, now 14, was matched with his mentor Anton three years ago through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

What began as weekly catch-ups built around a shared love of cars and building things has grown into a strong, supportive friendship that has had a lasting impact on Noah's confidence and outlook.

Over the years, Anton's encouragement and steady presence have helped Noah develop greater self-belief and independence. This year has been especially rewarding — Noah got his driver's license, a huge milestone that reflects how far he has come since they first met.

Noah continues to thrive, and while he and Anton don't catch up as often these days, their bond remains strong. It's a true celebration of success — Noah has grown into a confident, capable young man who doesn't need Anton's support in the same way he once did. Their friendship now stands as a reminder of how powerful mentoring can be in helping a young person find their own path.



Pictured in 2023 (Above) and 2025 (Below)



Stories Shaping Young Lives

Mendie & Amber



A Graduation

Just over 12 months ago, Mendie and Amber, who had never met each other before, were introduced through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Now – sitting in the sunny Duck Park, the bond between these two was evident. They have truly become such good friends. Amber couldn't wipe the smile off her face.

They shared stories of their adventures together, noting their visit to the Pilot Hill Sculpture Trail amongst their favourite activities, and spoke about how naturally they fell into their catch-up routine.

"There's no stress, we just do whatever we want. We can totally be ourselves. Sometimes we go on adventures, sometimes we're all 'peopled out' so we just chill." Said Mendie.

One of the biggest outcomes has been watching Amber come out of her shell, building confidence and happiness along the way. "I'm not as quiet anymore." Said Amber, and mum, Jo, agreed saying "She's come out of her shell now, she talks more, I don't have to talk to myself in the car anymore!", which had us all in fits of laughter.

Jo also spoke about how much Mendie means to the whole family, not just Amber.

"I'm not letting her go – she's now become family! You don't find many people like that in life."

They spoke about how Amber and Jo painted Mendie a flowerpot for her recent birthday, which says "Welcome – hope you brought coffee" which Mendie now has sitting at her front door. "They know me so well, and now I smile and think of Amber every time I walk out my door!" said Mendie.

I asked Amber if she'd recommend Big Brothers Big Sisters to other young people, and she said, "I already have!", her experience has been so positive she now has a friend who also has a 'big sister' of her own.

Although they are officially graduating from Big Brothers Big Sisters, these two have big plans. After recently hiking around Yarrangobilly, Amber has her sights set on climbing Mt. Kosciuszko!

"She's certainly come a long way from that girl you practically had to peel out of her bedroom." Said Jo with a big smile.

Watching these two build their friendship has been an absolute a joy. They have promised to send photos from the summit of Mt. Kosciusko when they get there!

Stories Shaping Young Lives Jamie & Doug

Building Confidence and Connection in Sydney's West

Jamie lives with his mum, Hayley, and has limited contact with his father, whose personal challenges have made it difficult to provide consistent support or a positive role model. This absence left Jamie without the steady guidance that helps young people develop confidence and a sense of direction.

In Sydney's western suburbs, many young people face similar challenges — family stress, limited opportunities, and the absence of reliable adult connections. The Big Brothers Big Sisters program helps bridge that gap by matching young people with trained volunteer mentors who offer stability, encouragement, and genuine care.

When Jamie was referred to the program, he was struggling with the emotional impact of that instability. From their very first meeting, Jamie and his mentor Doug formed an immediate bond through open conversation and shared interests. Doug's calm and supportive nature helped Jamie feel comfortable quickly, and his professional experience allowed him to guide and encourage Jamie's creative thinking — including discussions about Jamie's early business ideas.

For their first official activity, the pair built a model boat together. It was a hands-on project that not only strengthened their connection but also gave Jamie a chance to experience something new and fulfilling. Afterwards, Hayley sent Doug a heartfelt message:

"Hi Doug, I just wanted to let you know what a winner the boat is. Jamie had so much fun chatting to you while building it together and was really happy afterwards. I haven't ever sat down with him to make anything even remotely like that, so I'm so glad he's getting such a special opportunity to do so. Thank you, Hayley. PS photo attached in case you wanted to show your friend what competition he'll have!"

Since then, Jamie and Doug have continued to plan regular catch-ups, each one adding to the trust and enjoyment between them. Their match is already proving to be a powerful and positive influence — a reminder of how mentoring can create lasting change through simple, genuine connection.



Volunteers & Mentors

Our volunteers are the heart of Big Brothers Big Sisters — everyday people who choose to make an extraordinary difference in the life of a young person. Across Australia, they dedicate their time, compassion, and energy to building trusted, long-term relationships that change lives.

In 2025, more than ever, we saw the power of volunteering in action. New mentors completed training in child safety, trauma-informed practice, and youth engagement, preparing them to offer safe, supportive, and lasting connections. These mentors come from all walks of life — parents, professionals, students, retirees — yet share one common goal: to walk alongside young people, offering stability, understanding, and hope.

This year, hundreds of volunteers contributed thousands of hours of mentoring, fundraising, and community advocacy. From golf days to gaol cells, from corporate partnerships to school-based programs, they showed what true community leadership looks like. Their dedication has supported every milestone in our programs — from Melbourne’s western suburbs to Wangaratta, Tumut, and Sydney’s youth justice initiatives.

Behind every successful match is a mentor who listens, shows up, and believes in the potential of a young person. Together, our volunteers continue to prove that the simplest act — showing up — can have the most profound impact.



Voices from Our Volunteer Community

“You don’t need to have all the answers — you just need to show up, listen, and care. Watching my mentee grow in confidence has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.”

Volunteer Mentor, Melbourne

“My mentor makes me feel like I matter. They don’t try to fix everything — they just help me see what I’m capable of.”

Young Person, Western Suburbs Program

“Every volunteer brings something unique — their time, their story, their heart. It’s these small acts of consistency that change a young person’s world.”

— Caz Sammon, Mentoring Coordinator, Wangaratta

“Mentoring has changed how I see my role in the community. Giving an hour each week doesn’t just help one young person — it helps all of us build something stronger.”

— Corporate Mentor, Tumut



Our Team

Celebrating the People Behind Our Impact

The Team

- Rem Ali
- Diana Ginger
- Tania Hutchison
- Jodie Downey
- Belinda Chandler
- Emma Peacock
- Ya Ker Pa
- Ashleigh Gibson
- Mark Watt AM
- Caz Sammon
- Jay Tobin

We are proud to recognise the dedicated team who bring Big Brothers Big Sisters to life.

They are the steady supporters, thoughtful problem-solvers, and committed professionals who make safe, meaningful mentoring possible across every community we serve.

Our staff don't just coordinate programs — they walk alongside young people and their families through some of life's toughest moments. They listen, they advocate, and they stay present during periods of family violence, mental health challenges, school disengagement, and times of real uncertainty. Their commitment to child safety is unwavering, and they consistently go above and beyond to ensure every

young person is protected, supported, and heard.

They are match-makers, motivators, organisers, and often the first safe adult a young person feels able to trust. From running events, screening volunteers and delivering training to managing crises, celebrating achievements, and guiding families through complex situations, our team approaches every task with professionalism, courage, and genuine care. They do all of this with humility, humour, and a shared belief that one strong relationship can change a young person's life.

To our team — thank you. Your dedication, integrity, and compassion continue to shape stronger communities and brighter futures for young people across Australia.

Leadership & Support

Behind every successful program and event, Big Brothers Big Sisters is strengthened by the wisdom, experience, and generosity of business and community leaders who share their time, networks, and expertise with us.

Their guidance ensures our programs remain impactful, sustainable, and deeply connected to the communities we serve.

Throughout 2025, we have been supported by professionals whose business acumen, strategic insight, and commitment to our mission have helped shape our direction and expand our reach across Australia. Their support demonstrates the powerful role corporate leadership plays in building stronger, more resilient communities.

Alongside this strategic guidance, we continue to benefit from a broad network of corporate partners who contribute pro bono services, sponsorship, mentoring, and industry expertise.

Their involvement spans sectors including education, media, construction, legal, and corporate advisory — bringing diverse perspectives and innovation to our work.

This collective leadership, from boardrooms to community halls, underscores the essential role of partnership in driving sustainable social impact. It is through this collaboration that Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to grow as a trusted, values-driven organisation — one that connects professional excellence with a powerful purpose: empowering young people to thrive.

We warmly acknowledge the supporters, donors, foundations, and partners whose commitment makes our work possible.





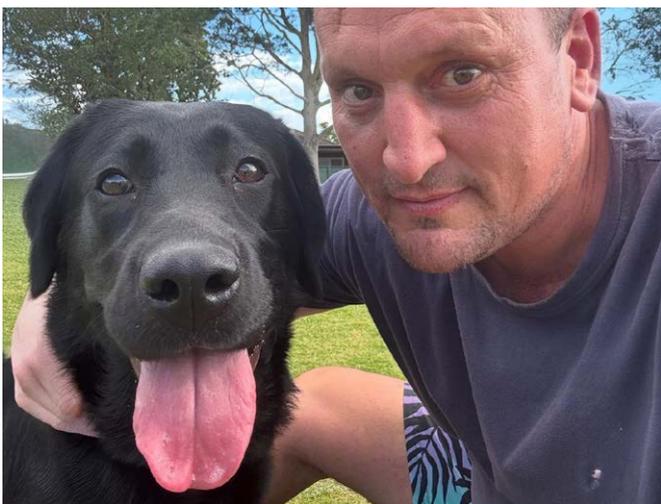
Ambassador - Sammy J

Our Ambassadors

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our ambassadors, whose involvement helps raise awareness and strengthen our programs.

A special acknowledgement to Sammy J, who has been a long-standing supporter of our annual event. Over the years he has consistently shown up for Big Brothers Big Sisters — giving his time, his talent, and his platform to help champion mentoring in Australia. In November, he once again brought humour and generosity together, raising more than \$21,000 through a comedy sketch that even featured Kyle Sandilands.

Sammy’s ongoing commitment helps keep our work visible and ensures more young people receive the support they need.



Ambassador - Matty Smith

“I received a call from the Police one Friday evening, they said that they were on a bridge with my Little Brother and he was threatening to jump.”

Brothers Big Sisters Ambassador Matty Smith is sharing his own story to show the profound difference a mentor can make for a young person. “The fact that he had asked them to call me was a great sign. We were able to learn a lot from

this situation together and thankfully I was there for that cry for help - the other outcome would’ve been devastating.” We asked Matty what it was that inspired him to take on an ambassador role with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

“I was actually a Big Brother for 18 years. I began mentoring my ‘Little Brother’ Jay when he was 13. I thoroughly enjoyed what the program gave both to us. Unfortunately, Jay tragically passed away in the middle of 2024. After his loss, it got me thinking about how I can contribute to Big Brothers Big Sisters in a different capacity. The natural role for me was to become an ambassador for these great kids and great people wanting to share what Jay and I experience.”

“I also wanted to share this message with people who can support us in ways other than mentoring and help make this wonderful program sustainable and available to more youth in need.”

Here’s what Matty wishes more people knew about Big Brothers Big Sisters:

“Big Brothers Big Sisters quite literally keeps kids out of trouble, off the streets and can in most cases be the only consistent in their lives.

“I can say from my experience that it is the most rewarding thing I have done outside of building my own family. I would encourage anyone and everyone to be a part of something truly this special.”

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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