

# HUMAN



2022 IMPACT REPORT

# NATURE



**We are not government funded and rely on grants, philanthropy and donations from people like you to ensure our evidence based programs can continue.**

## **Acknowledgement of country.**

We acknowledge and respect the Nyangbul people of the Bundjalung Nation – original people of the land on which we are based. We respectfully acknowledge the ancient cultural presence in the Australian landscape by First Nation people and their ongoing traditional and spiritual custodianship of the bush, rivers, lakes, beaches, marine areas and mountains that we venture into in our work.



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**This is what I  
was looking for  
when my kids  
were at risk.**

# Foreword.

## Mandy Nolan, Human Nature Patron.

Our young people live in unprecedented times; they have been born into a world with an uncertain future. The very real threat of having to live with the impacts of climate change creates a complex architecture of dread and depression for this generation. And research suggests it's part of what underwrites the epidemic of anxiety and mental health issues that young people are navigating.

As a mother of children who experienced profound mental health issues during adolescence, I despaired at the lack of appropriate and effective mental health supports and services in our region. The clinical setting in my view just reaffirmed to them that they were broken. It didn't provide the skills and support for them to find their way into their young adulthood.

Sitting in a room and talking about what's wrong with you doesn't change lives. Being in nature – creating friendships, doing what challenges you, driving forward a new story about who you are – that is where healing starts. That is where real courage is found – in taking those steps into the world, facing the trauma and the complexity head on, but doing it in nature, with your tribe. That's what Human Nature provides; a place to transform mental health issues into the foundation stones of an insightful, empathetic, compassionate young adult.

This was what I was looking for when my kids were at risk. It didn't turn up because of a government grant. It grew out of need. It grew in step with the needs of the young people it was created for, not the compliance regime of a government department crunching numbers for data reports.

**Human Nature is the future. I have seen young people be transformed. I have seen lives reclaimed and futures that looked bleak, now blazing ahead! It saves lives. It inspires. It listens. It grows. It works.**

With so many young people experiencing mental health issues, it's time we looked to new models to support them. Models that are created with them at the centre of their care. Models that empower rather than disempower. Models that wrap around when they need support, and release when they are ready to fly. Models that can be responsive, that can adapt, that can be what an individual needs.

**That model is Human Nature.**

# Introduction.

## A report from Sharyn White our CEO.

The Human Nature Model of care is unique. It provides an important addition to the service landscape that aims to ensure that the well-being of our youth is protected, and that future generations of humans can thrive.

The model is compelling because it takes a holistic view of providing mental health support, and this leads to its success.

**For many, we are the first service able to meet their needs.**

Our team focuses on building a trusting relationship with each young person and they do whatever it takes to get them engaged in the therapeutic process. As a result, we have a remarkable engagement rate of over 90% – meaning that young people turn up and do the work to turn their lives around.

**Because of that we are able to achieve life-changing outcomes and the evidence of our success is growing.**

Outcome and experience measures all point to the significant benefits that can be achieved when you use evidence-based interventions with engaged young people. This report is full of the words of young people who will confidently attest to the

difference Human Nature has made to their lives.

**The work that we do would not be possible without the amazing humans who work at Human Nature.**

Our team is our most precious resource and recruiting and retaining the right people is critical. Traditionally, there is very high burnout doing this work so we ensure that there is a supportive multidisciplinary team in place. Regular staff surveys attest to the respectful and collaborative environment we create and our focus on the safety and wellbeing of the team.

**One of the most challenging things to do is to define what is good value for money for a service like ours.**

In the financial year 2021/22 we invested \$14,360 on direct service provision for each young person. That is just under \$1,200 per month, exclusive of our administration expenses. Yet when compared to the dire alternatives of doing nothing, where a single day in an adolescent mental health unit costs over \$2,500 per day and juvenile detention costs a staggering \$713,940 per year in NSW, the value we bring is starkly apparent.

### **I would like to thank:**

The visionary philanthropists who have nurtured Human Nature, growing it into the service it is today. To those who have just started their journey with Human Nature – thank you for joining us so we can ensure that all young people can access support that meets their needs and helps them to thrive. I hope you will all stand with us as we undertake the next phase of our development.

To the Board, who willingly and enthusiastically volunteer their time and bring a wealth of experience, thank you for believing and for your commitment to building a better future for our youth.

I would also like to acknowledge all of the support we receive pro bono and in kind from organisations and individuals that share our vision – your generosity does not go unnoticed.

Thank you to the staff, who have weathered a difficult year, especially in the immediate aftermath of the floods. Few were completely unscathed in their personal lives, but always brought their best selves to the work and were determined to put the interests of the young people before everything else. The senior leadership team deserves special acknowledgment



- these extraordinary humans bring a depth of experience, an absolute passion for the work and an unwavering commitment to creating a better future for all young people. I know that together we can have a huge impact.

**Most importantly, I would like to thank the young people who do the hard work to change their lives with our support - you are the reason we exist and your successes give purpose to our work.**



**“Over the past 12 months we have navigated COVID-19 and catastrophic floods. These presented challenges that were difficult for many services to overcome. Human Nature was able to meet these challenges - proving that it is possible to adapt and change course quickly. Our resilience and responsiveness in the face of uncertainty and upheaval is something we are very proud of.”**



# Our purpose.

**Our purpose is to empower young people to navigate life's challenges - transforming trauma and disadvantage into healing and growth.**

Even before the full impact of COVID-19 and the recent natural disasters, there was a youth mental health crisis in Australia.

The latest National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2020 found that almost 40 percent of young people aged 16-24 years had a diagnosable mental health disorder that lasted for at least 12 months and there are burgeoning rates of suicide and self harm in adolescents. The statistics are even worse in regional areas like ours. Existing services are simply not enough to address this rising tide of need, nor are they right for everyone.

**Now, more than ever, there is a need for an alternative.**

A service that young people want to use, where cost and transport availability are not barriers. One that does not limit the amount of service available due to funding constraints. One that supports them to build a network of peers and that is there for as long as is needed. One that has evidence of success.

**Human Nature is that alternative.**

We help young people overcome past trauma and change the trajectory of their lives so they can have a bright future, for themselves and for future generations.

Our aim is to strengthen a young person's capacity to regulate emotions, find alternatives to risk-taking behaviours, build resilience for difficult situations and adversities and promote supportive social environments and networks.

Our goal is to empower them to navigate life's challenges and to avoid the need for more extreme interventions further on in their lives, supporting them to build a sense of control so that they become resilient young adults.

**Our goal is to enable those we work with to navigate life's challenges and to avoid the need for more extreme interventions further on in their lives, supporting them to build a sense of control so that they become resilient young adults.**



## We're doing things differently.

Human Nature provides a unique model of care to young people. We believe it's a model that deserves to be available to all who are currently falling through the gaping holes in the existing mental health service landscape, especially in regional areas.

When young people come to us, they have usually exhausted all other options. More conventional services have not been able to meet their needs or successfully engage with them and the future can look pretty dire. By offering a highly flexible and tailored approach, where time is invested in building a trusting relationship, Human Nature can be there where other interventions have failed.

We invest in supporting each young person to overcome the risk factors in their lives. These include low self-esteem, anxiety, early substance use, poor social skills, parent-child conflict and school failure. At the same time, we help build their protective factors such as emotional self-regulation, good coping and problem-solving skills, cultural connections, supportive family relationships and physical and psychological safety.

We measure our success through outcomes which achieve the improved overall wellbeing of young people:

**Psychological - therapy and mentoring that works**

**Physical - trying new physical activities**

**Social - group adventures**

**Ecological - appreciation of nature**

so every young person we reach can triumph over adversity and thrive.



# Kane's experience.

## Human Nature Therapist.

As an Adventure Therapist I really see the benefits of taking young people out of their familiar structures – schools, home environments etc – and into a neutral space like nature. It changes the power dynamic of therapist and client and is a great leveller – we're inviting the young person to co-create an experience in each session, so it's a reciprocal relationship.

Being away from a clinical setting helps to establish the relationship with a young person, and the relationship is the foundation. From there we can build a therapeutic connection through shared experiences like eating together, driving together, walking and talking. It seems simple, but it helps to break down the barriers and gives young people an opportunity to get out into outdoor areas they wouldn't usually be able to access.

Human Nature offers something conventional therapy doesn't. It's something really unique that can get through to a cohort of young people in the region who otherwise struggle to access therapy. It's our responsibility to show up for young people and in doing so we can reach those real breakthrough points where we're able to connect the superficial goal a young person might have, like giving up substance use, with a deeper underlying driver. And we're able to tune into that experience and ultimately build some coherence around it. It's those lightbulb moments where we understand why we are the way we are and what makes us tick. We get to the root.

I gain so much from that too, I learn more about me, I learn more about humanity and the world. It sounds cheesy, but every person I've ever worked with, I've learnt something from.

**The Human Nature approach may sound like common sense but it's not currently funded by existing government funding streams. We are on a mission to change that, sharing the evidence of our success and actively building partnerships, so that more and more young people can get this intensive and tailored service when they need it.**



## Who are the young people we support?

They are brave. They want to live meaningful, joyful lives. They are diverse in culture, gender, passions and dreams. They have experienced a range of adversities including family violence, poverty, discrimination, childhood traumas, bullying, negative learning experiences, and more recently, a global pandemic and multiple climate change disasters.

They have developed extreme survival skills as adaptive attempts to cope with their life experiences. These survival skills can look like aggression and being very reactive and unable to be still, or the opposite – isolating in their room, awake all night and sleeping during the day and being verbally non expressive.

These survival skills make accessing office based, time limited support impossibly challenging. We often say ‘we work at the pace of trust’. This is what being trauma informed actually means. We set appointments at times and places most likely for success. We proactively remind them of appointments and keep offering our services while they test us and take the time they need to trust us. We work on the things they feel are important. We give them choices, ensure they feel safe, that they feel we are trustworthy and can support their empowerment and healing while holding space for their distress or other trauma responses.

It takes time to build trust and rapport and prove we’re not going to be just another service who says “they wouldn’t engage”. This is what’s needed to build safety and stabilisation before any healing or processing of trauma can happen.



# Andy Hamilton, Founder & Therapeutic Lead.

**We're committed to walking alongside young people with nowhere left to turn.**

As public recognition grows regarding the ever-increasing youth mental health crisis, we at Human Nature are faced with the daily dilemma of who to help and who to turn away - knowing that, for the burgeoning number of young people and their families who we cannot support, there is very little else for them. The choice is grim. There are indeed lives at stake.

The inspiration to build Human Nature arose from work done at the coalface of mental health, corrections and addiction services, and the stark recognition that many young people were falling through the gaps of conventional services with disastrous consequences.

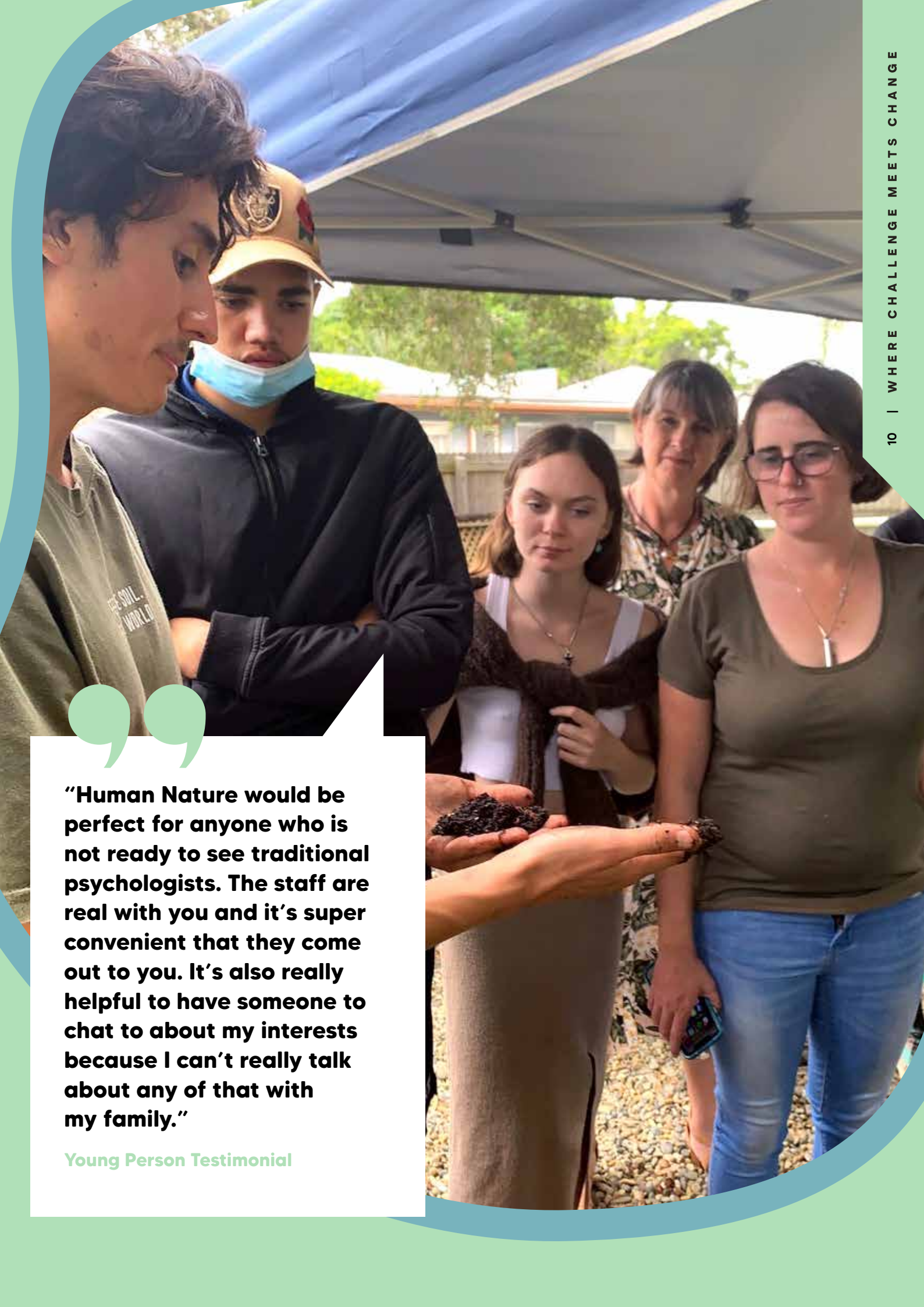


We know that innovative, flexible and individualised approaches are what is required to adapt to the needs of struggling young people who are not getting the help they need from 'one size fits all' strategies.

Since our inception in 2015, this is exactly the approach we have taken. Among the many things we have learned in this time is the crucial recognition that healing and recovery from complex trauma and disadvantage cannot be rushed. It stands out as a beacon to remind us to continue to resist the pressure to play the numbers game and push people through our service too quickly.

Today I am extremely proud of our well-honed capacity to work in the unique way we do and our resolute commitment to walking alongside our most vulnerable young people on their path of healing and growth. Simultaneously I am increasingly alarmed at the disastrous passage of youth wellbeing, and galvanised into action to expand our scope of influence and begin to weave a wider web of support to fill those gaping chasms through which young lives are exponentially hurtling out of control.





**“Human Nature would be perfect for anyone who is not ready to see traditional psychologists. The staff are real with you and it’s super convenient that they come out to you. It’s also really helpful to have someone to chat to about my interests because I can’t really talk about any of that with my family.”**

**Young Person Testimonial**

# Our impact.

## Tracking progress.

In the past year we have embedded tools that allow us to track the progress each young person is making, and adjust our approach as needed:

### My Mind Star

#### Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires

#### The Most Significant Change Approach

Our engagement rate is also very important to us. We know that we can only support young people if they want to work with us. Human Nature is proud of its **93% engagement rate**. This measures the percentage of young people who are referred to us and who engage long-term with our services. It's significant as we work with the young people that other services have been unable to engage and means young people persist for the time that is needed to make real changes in their lives.

## My Mind Star.

My Mind Star has been developed for use with young people who are experiencing mental illness or poor mental health. The young person and their Mentor decide together where the young person is on their Journey of Change, then they agree which areas to work on and how to approach them.

At regular points they go back to the Star to get a clear picture of what is working well and where things could still be improved, providing an engaging visual picture of how their lives have changed.

Completing My Mind Star is a helpful, engaging and empowering process that stimulates and focuses discussion and provides a useful, shared basis for a support plan.

There are seven key areas, designed to open up the conversation between the mentor and young person which are designed along a five point scale.





# Sam's Mind Star.

When Sam first engaged with Human Nature, he assessed his feelings and emotions, self esteem, and school, training and work as Stuck or Unsafe (1). He assessed his lifestyle, where he lived, friends and relationships and how he used his time as Talking About It (2). After seeing a Therapist and Mentor weekly, then fortnightly, for five months, Sam did a new Mind Star.

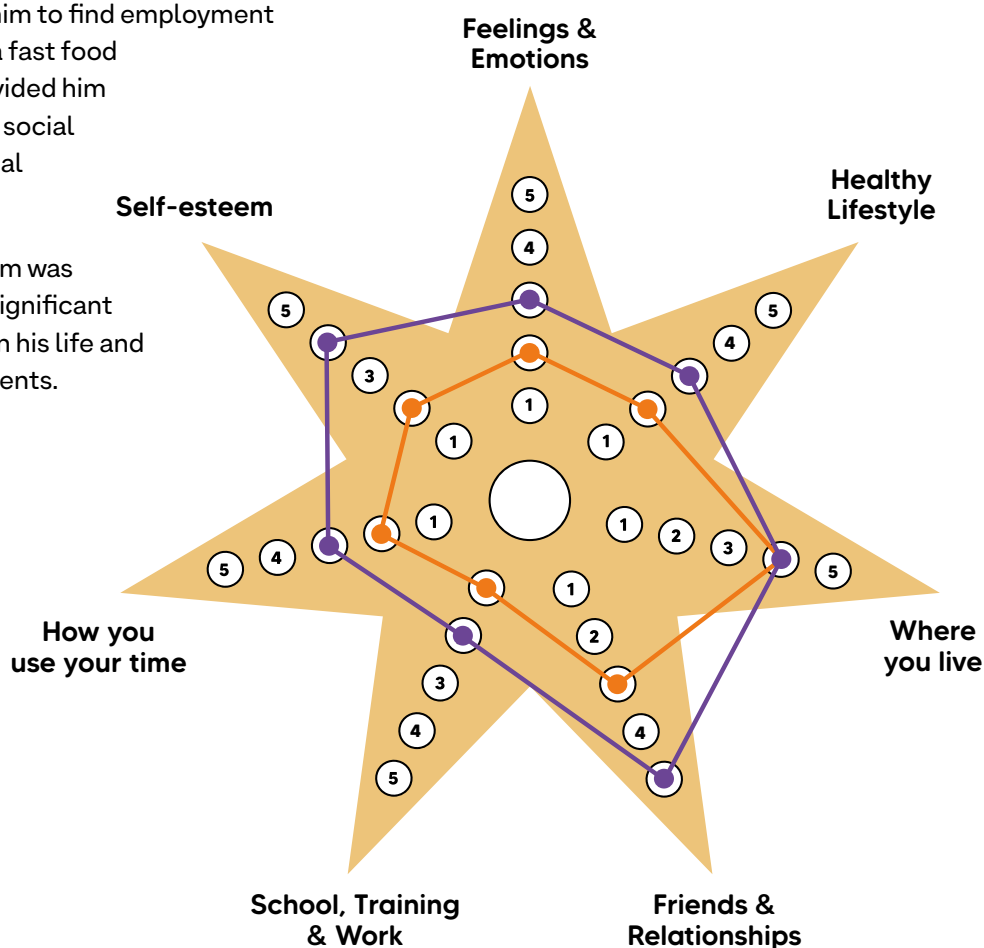
This time he assessed his healthy lifestyle as Believing and Taking Action (3); his thoughts and emotions, where he lived, and how he uses his time as Learning What Works (4), and his self esteem, work and friends and relationships as Managing Well (5).

What changed for Sam during this time? His therapist used Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and other self esteem raising therapeutic practices and worked with Sam to improve his communication and relationship with his carer. They also worked on reducing his cannabis use.

His mentor introduced him to physical activities such as going for a walk and mountain bike riding. When Sam felt more confident and had reduced his cannabis use, his mentor supported him to find employment and he loves his job at a fast food outlet. The job has provided him with a new and positive social group as well as financial independence.

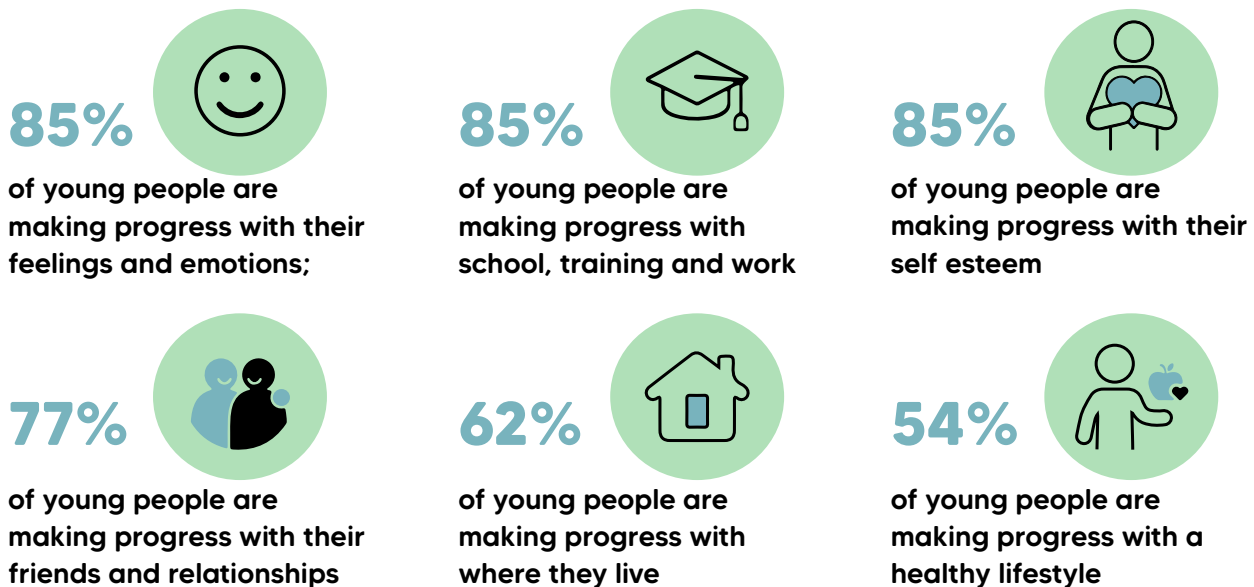
Using the Mind Star, Sam was able to vividly see the significant progress he has made in his life and celebrate his achievements.

- 1 Stuck or unsafe
- 2 Talking about it
- 3 Believing & taking action
- 4 Learning what works
- 5 Managing Well



## Measuring young peoples progress.

A snapshot of current clients using My Mind Star data shows the following:



## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires.

We also use the young person self-assessment and parent assessment SDQ as a retrospective pre-post measure as young people exit the active therapy phase of their time with us into group activities.

One of the highlights from the results of these surveys is the way in which they have been able to reveal the positive impact parents feel Human Nature is having on their children, with 87% saying their children's problems are much better and 78% stating that Human Nature's services have been helpful a great deal.

## The Most Significant Change Approach.

The Most Significant Change (MSC) approach involves generating and analysing personal accounts of change. MSC can be very helpful in explaining how change comes about (processes and causal mechanisms) and when (in what situations and contexts).

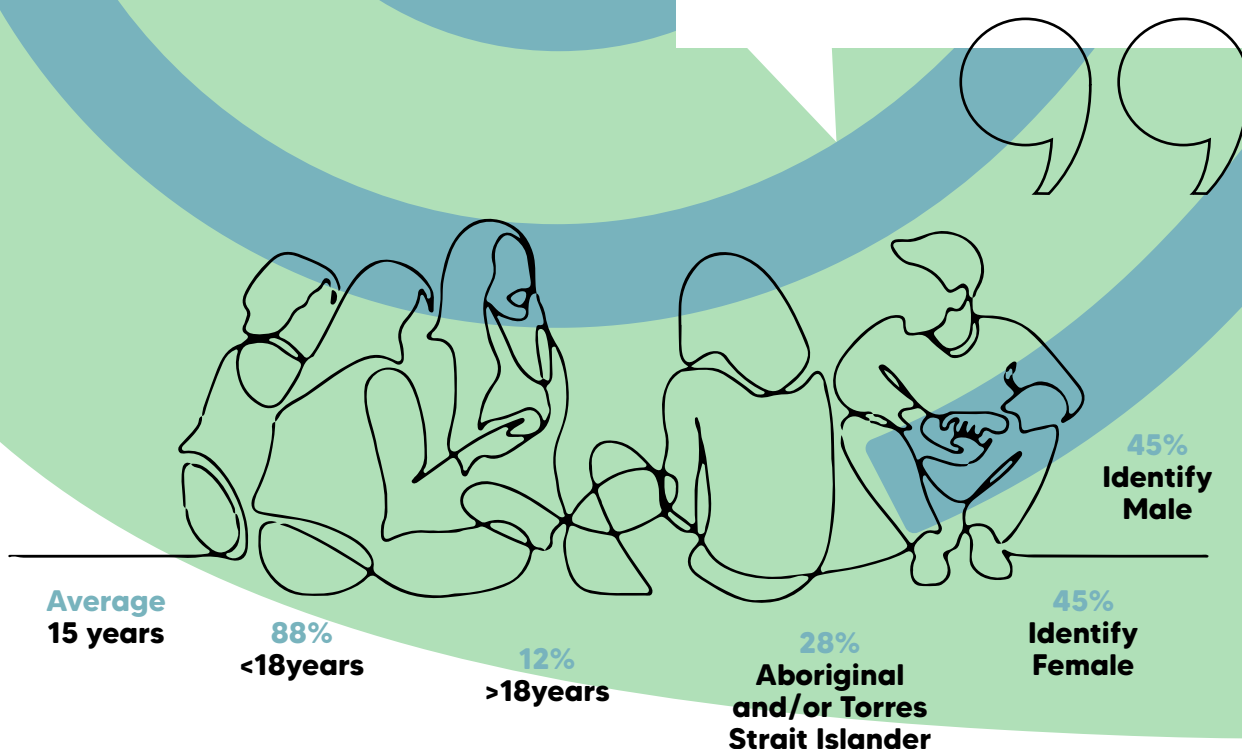
We have been overwhelmed by the positive responses we have received from clients with many revealing how Human Nature's programs have enabled them to, among other things, increase their confidence, articulate their feelings, work through trauma and become more effective at dealing with their emotions.

Through these surveys parents have also revealed that their child's anger has reduced considerably and that Human Nature's programs have considerably contributed to improvements in their young person's communication skills. There is no doubt that a young person's experience with Human Nature's programs has positively impacted their life trajectory with one parent revealing "I think the experience she has had with Human Nature will have a great impact on her future".



**"I've learned how to control my emotions better, not be in control of them but to allow them to pass and not be controlled by THEM. I've learned that emotions are healthy to feel but to not be consumed by them. And that ignoring them and being numb won't help me heal, it's only a coping mechanism"**

**Young Person Testimonial**



## Demographic Data.

### 2612 Therapeutic Hours Delivered

\*10% do not wish to disclose their gender identity

\*Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants have fallen from 39% in the previous year as a direct result of the floods and the severe impact on the Aboriginal community; many have had to relocate out of the region to access housing. Therapeutic support is not a priority while basic needs are not being met.

\*Hours delivered were disrupted by COVID related restrictions and isolation requirements.

# Impact stories.

## Amanda.

Amanda\* was only 16 years old when she came to Human Nature. Struggling with crippling anxiety, she felt hopeless and alone. Her father was absent and her mother had her own mental health challenges to deal with, leaving Amanda to look after herself. Isolated and disconnected from her friends, she was quietly disengaging from everyone around her.

Amanda's school was concerned but they just didn't have the resources to give her the level of help she really needed. Amanda didn't believe she would make it to the end of the school year.

But then Amanda found out about our 10 day therapeutic expedition and saw an opportunity to take a break from her dysfunctional home life, get out of school and have an adventure in nature.

### **What she didn't expect was a transformative therapeutic experience that would fundamentally change her life.**

Over the years Amanda had learned to shut down her emotions and stay silent, believing her own needs weren't as valid as those around her. But towards the final days of the expedition Amanda finally broke down and allowed herself, to acknowledge that she was seriously struggling. She disclosed that she'd been self-harming and using drugs to numb the pain she felt deep down.

The expedition was the supportive environment Amanda needed to safely share her story and connect with others who had similar experiences. It allowed her to build meaningful relationships with our team of mental health professionals that would have taken years to develop in a conventional setting. She was finally getting the help she desperately needed, but could never ask for.

Over time, Amanda transformed her anxiety and started speaking up and making her own choices. She learned new positive strategies to replace the destructive behaviours she'd developed as a way to cope and now knows when to reach out for support. And she did finish school.

Now when Amanda is struggling or gets overwhelmed, her Therapeutic Mentor reminds her how to reconnect with nature, using grounding techniques to stay in the present moment and regulate her emotions. If Amanda hadn't received support, she might still be trying to cope alone and in silence. But today, Amanda is prioritising her own mental health and is committed to creating a positive future for herself.







**“My mental health has improved so much over the past 6 months since being with Human Nature. They’ve helped to pick me up and get me outside, going to places like this that make it easier to talk through my worries. And today I threw a few more worries to the river and feel lighter for it.”**

**Young Person Testimonial**



# Chloe.

Chloe came to Human Nature at age 17 having been in a chaotic spiral of drug use and mental health crises for the previous six years. Through our programs she was able to stabilise her mental health, cease her drug dependency, identify and work on significant childhood trauma, complete her HSC and subsequently enrol in her university course of choice. Whilst she continues to engage in therapeutic work in relation to healing her trauma, she has managed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and continue on a positive life trajectory.

**Ceased Drug Dependency**

**Stabilised Mental Health**

**Enrolled in University**

**Completed HSC**

**Maintains Healthy Lifestyle**



“Without Human Nature I would not be where I am today, and though I still have a long way to go, I am thankful I am at where I am at.

**The genuine support and incredible advice has stabilised and centred me in this pivotal time of my life when I most needed it. At times, I would go as far to say Human Nature has saved my life.**

Human Nature gives me passion to live, and I mean really live, the type of living where you're barefoot in the bush and feeling at peace, or sailing across the sea and feeling genuine happiness for the first time. Human Nature has propelled me into true healing, even when at times I didn't want to. It's hard to put into words how much this organisation truly means to me. And the healing they have blessed me and my family with is unmatched to any counsellor, psychologist, nurse, psychiatrist or hospital I have ever experienced before.”







**"It's been good to have someone to talk to and reach out to. I still have things that I can improve on with talking to counsellors and things like that, but I've learned that it gets easier with time. It's been helpful to know that I'm not alone and that other people go through what I go through. And recently it's been easier to talk to other people about how I've been feeling."**

**Young Person Testimonial**





# A parent's experience.



"My 16 year old son has been working with Kane from Human Nature for the last ten months. He is a highly intelligent autistic historian, who lives with ADHD and complex trauma from his early childhood. I have been their solo full-time parent for six years. We experienced domestic violence and abandonment by the other parent.

I contacted Human Nature when he suffered an acute decline into major depression. From the outset, I observed that Kane worked at his pace to develop a rootedness from which to grow the therapeutic relationship. They spent time in places where he felt safe: at home, in our local neighbourhood and accessing places that he was familiar with.

Kane slotted in to provide support and connection with the challenges he faced in changing schools and in navigating public transport, by picking him up from the bus and providing a backstop for him to debrief and down-regulate. Kane has consistently shown up for him during this time and bit by bit, he has begun to lean in to the consistency, kindness, and deeply positive regard that Kane holds him in.

Kane's insight into the psycho-emotional landscape that he is navigating is profoundly accurate and enlightening. With his authorisation, Kane has shared his reading of this landscape with me. In doing so, I feel I've gone from navigating an unknown landscape in the dark, being guided mainly by my own guilt and fear, to having a clear sense of how and where I can make changes in our home environment and in my relational approach that will support him to engage more fully with his life and navigate the challenges that he faces.


**I can't speak to his experience but I can speak to what I have observed in him and the changes that I notice. He has anchored new friendships at his school and is developing these further. He is taking more responsibility for his activities of daily living. He is taking better care of his body. He is gradually changing his relationship to food. He is developing his emotional intelligence. He is developing his self-responsibility.**

One event took place, which seems to be the tip of the iceberg of bigger subconscious change. For the first time, after experiencing a trigger, he came to me in emotional upheaval, crying and suffering, and was able to articulate his anger at his father and at me, he spoke of feeling conflicted about his anger towards us. He was able to access and to stay with these very painful feelings for a time.

After this event, I observed that he was lighter, was more able to engage with the family. I think this capacity is directly related to the work that he is doing with Kane and Human Nature.


I feel hopeful about the trajectory that we are on, having the support of Kane and Human Nature continues to make a world of difference for both him and me. The going was slow at first, and there were instances where both mine and his resistance and trauma had the potential to divert and interrupt the process. I see that so much was happening at a deeper level and that what is emerging now has the potential to lead us both towards a life of post-traumatic growth and from there I believe we both have hope of thriving, and that most of all, he has the opportunity to reach his full potential."





**"Some truly amazing work the Human Nature team do. Saying that Human Nature changed my life is an understatement because it helped me change my life, helped me save it. Human Nature was just the guiding light I needed to help myself blossom into the amazing person I am today."**

**Young Person Testimonial**



**"When I heard about this camp, I was at rock bottom, I hit rock bottom, like, no job, no money. I was living out of a bag pretty much and I heard about the camp and I felt like I needed to get away from all that kind of stuff that's happening at 'home'. And like, it was difficult coming here because having addictions I rely on stuff to get to sleep. I was running on no sleep for two days. This camp is definitely something I needed."**

**Young Person Testimonial**



# Our place in the youth mental health sector.

For young people getting help usually means travelling to a service and sitting in a room with a clinician they don't know. Sometimes, the only thing young people can access is an online support service.

Young people are told to reach out for help, but when they do, there may be nothing there that meets their needs.

It's clear that Human Nature has a rightful place in the youth mental health service landscape. In fact, we believe we have an obligation to ensure that more young people have access to support like ours, so they can change the trajectory of their lives before it is too late.

We exist to work with those who need something different. We know that by supporting them now, we can have a lifelong impact by reducing mental illness and the associated risks of self harm, suicide, addiction, incarceration and the related intergenerational impacts.

## Deliver:

1:1  
Therapy

Group activities  
with peers

Youth leadership  
development

Case  
management

Extended groups  
and camps

1:1  
Mentoring

## Influence:

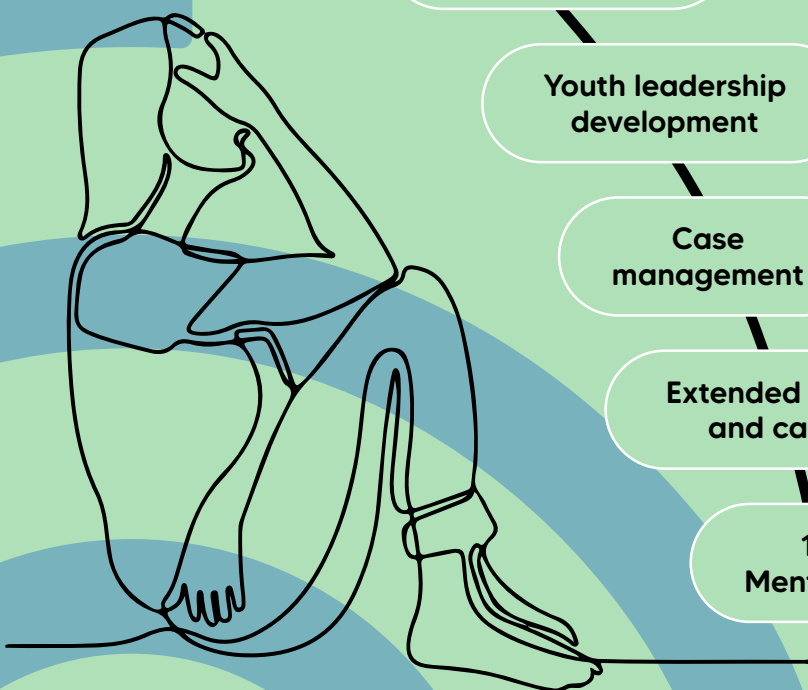
Family  
& Carers

Coaching &  
resources for low  
intensity needs

Mental  
health system

Schools

Other  
Practitioners





## Every young person is unique, and so is our approach.

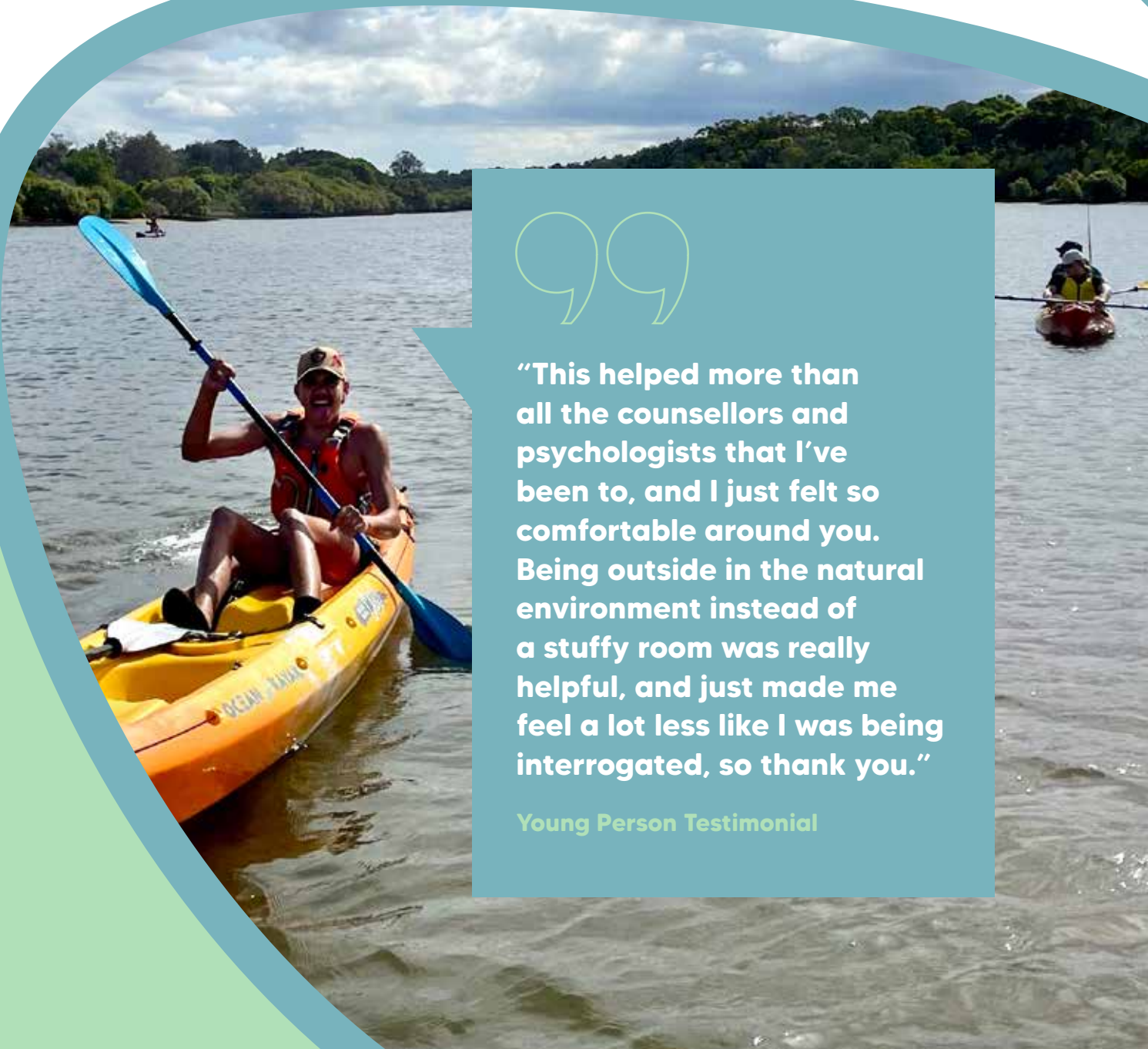
Our approach is to offer each young person a range of supports, such as one to one therapy, mentoring, therapeutic group activities and camps, matched to their individual needs. We recognise that these needs can change over time and so should our response. The level and timing of support offered and the way it is provided is tailored – always with an aim to build tolerance to more conventional, publicly funded, services available in their community.

For one young person that might mean an intensive period of one to one sessions with a therapist, while another may respond better to a mentor or group activities. Our team works with each individual to provide them with the right support at the right time to meet their goals.



**“This helped more than all the counsellors and psychologists that I’ve been to, and I just felt so comfortable around you. Being outside in the natural environment instead of a stuffy room was really helpful, and just made me feel a lot less like I was being interrogated, so thank you.”**

**Young Person Testimonial**



## We share our approach.

In addition to working directly with young people, we believe it's our responsibility to share our way of working with others in the sector so that our approaches can be incorporated into their work. We do this by talking about our work at every opportunity. In doing so we can ensure that more young people receive mental health support that is able to meet their needs.

- We have collaborated with schools, seeking out those displaced young people who were most in need of support.
- We have been building community connections through public speaking, media, social media and a powerful video where young people share their own stories of change as a result of Human Nature's support.
- We are building and strengthening relationships with the local and wider service ecosystem, collaborating with other health and social sector organisations to maximise our collective impact.
- And we're looking forward to collaborating with our FGG social impact partners, to learn, adapt and continue to refine what we do.

## The cost of young people not getting the support they need.

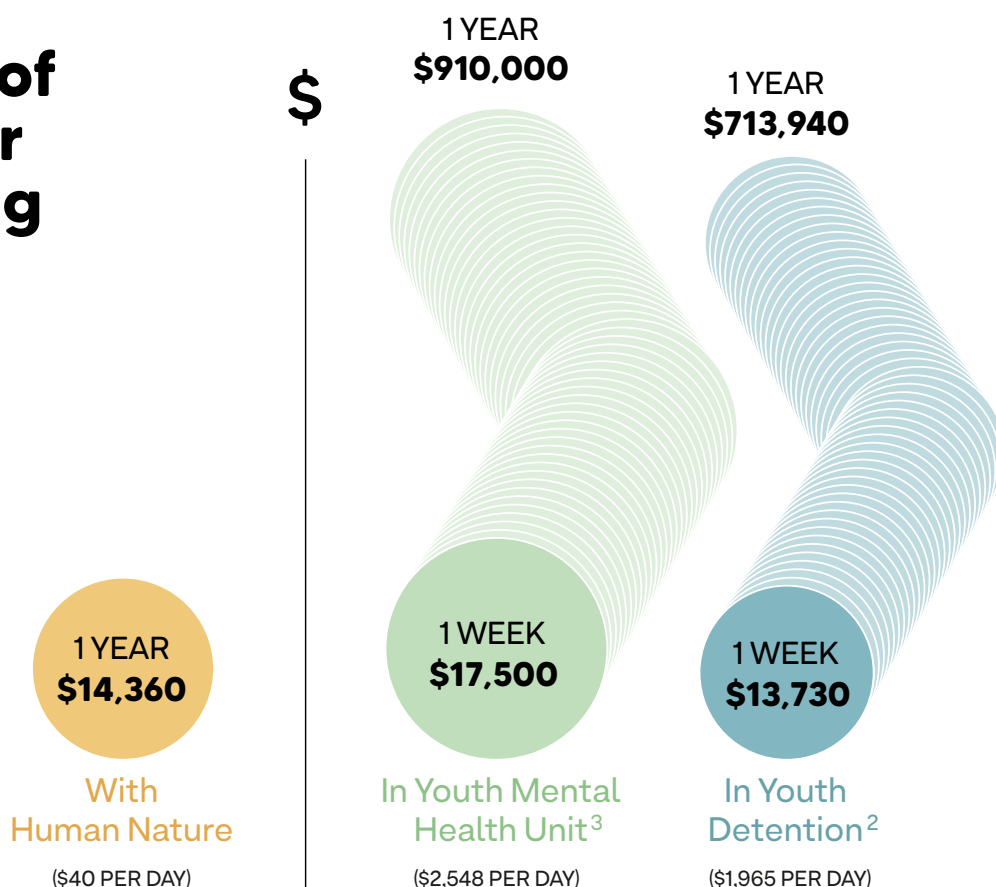
In 2021/22 Human Nature delivered over 2600 therapeutic hours of support, providing a highly tailored service to each young person who accessed our help. The average expenditure per young person was \$14,360. This might seem like a lot, but we know this investment is what it takes to change a young person's life and set them on a positive path.

Conversely, the cost of doing nothing is staggering. While the personal and societal costs cannot be measured in dollar terms, the financial impacts are significant. Prevention services, like ours, are the last frontier between young people and these dire outcomes.

Human Nature helps young people to address their mental health illness risk factors and supports them to build the protective factors they need to shield them from lifelong mental illness and the associated dire outcomes.

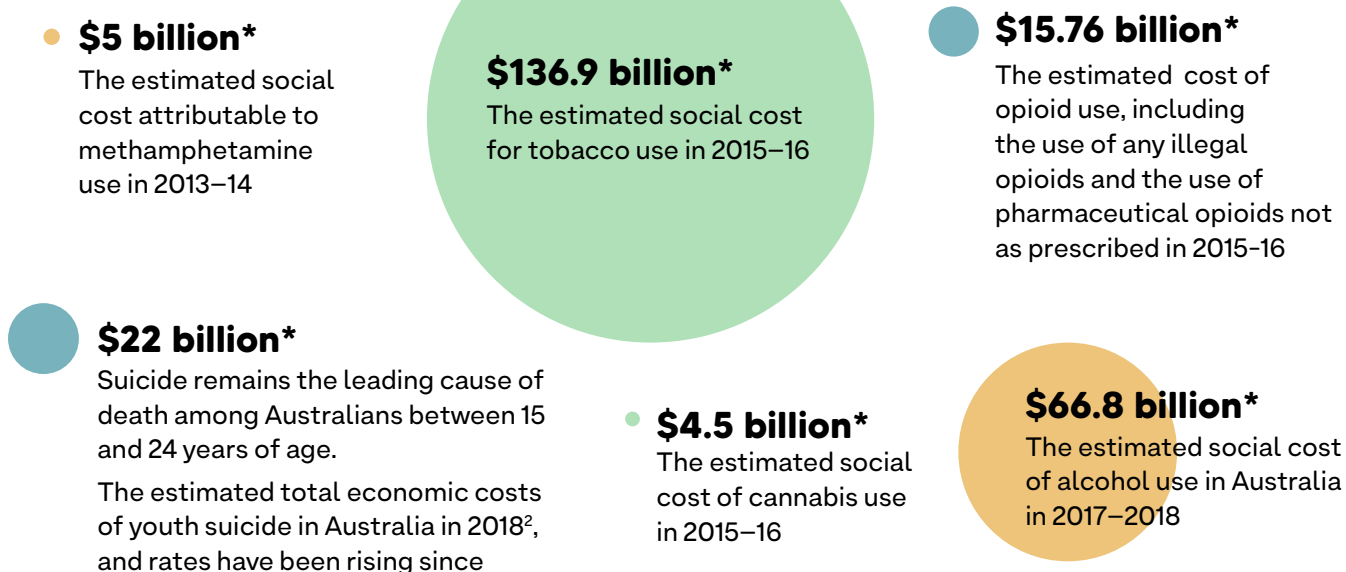
# The cost of caring for one young person.

\*According to budget estimates provided by Youth Justice NSW



# The estimated cost of substance misuse in Australia is significant.

\* The AIHW reports<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://greens.org.au/nsw/news/media-release/youth-justice-reveals-cost-imprisoning-children-713-940-child-year>

<sup>2</sup> Kinchin I, Doran CM. The Cost of Youth Suicide in Australia. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Apr 4;15(4):672. doi: 10.3390/ijerph15040672. Erratum in: Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2018 Sep 06;15(9): PMID: 29617305; PMCID: PMC5923714.

<sup>3</sup> [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-content/expenditure-on-mental-health-related-services](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-content/expenditure-on-mental-health-related-services)

<sup>4</sup> [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia)



# The impact of the floods.

In February 2022, and again in March, our community was hit by unprecedented floods. Along with so many others, we saw an unfathomable level of destruction in our streets. There were people who lost everything. When the rain finally stopped and it was safe to drive on the local roads again, our team gathered at our office in Ballina; we cleaned the mud from the walls, we shared our stories and we cried for all that was lost. Then we asked ourselves, how can Human Nature help our community recover?

After such a catastrophic disaster like this, we knew young people would need us more than ever. Many of the young people in our programs were impacted by the floods either directly or indirectly – for some, their schools were significantly damaged and their schooling severely disrupted. Others had homes so badly damaged they needed temporary or emergency housing or had to ‘camp’ in their flood damaged homes with no water, electricity or furniture.

## A community coming together.

The only way we could support young people was by our community coming together to make sure they didn’t miss out on the urgent mental health support they needed.

Some incredible individuals and organisations, like SmartAid, rallied quickly to help us get back on our feet operationally so we could be there to support young people who were impacted by the floods. The generosity of The Wilson Foundation enabled us to immediately increase our service delivery and gave us a boost to our Youth Flood Trauma Recovery Appeal by match-funding all donations.

Others offered flood relief grants and donated or discounted supplies – all of which made a huge difference. Thank you for standing beside us – when we most needed you, you were there for us.

### In the immediate aftermath we:

- Ramped up our service delivery to provide over 162 hours of face to face therapy and case management support for flood affected young people, collaborating with existing local services in the community.
- Carried out home visits to flood damaged homes to provide practical assistance.
- Increased our therapeutic support for existing clients who had lost their homes, school, places of employment and/or places where they used to connect with their community, providing individual and small group sessions.
- Accepted new referrals from flood-affected regions.
- Provided respite for young people by offering therapeutic activities such as horse riding or bushwalking outside of flood-ravaged areas.



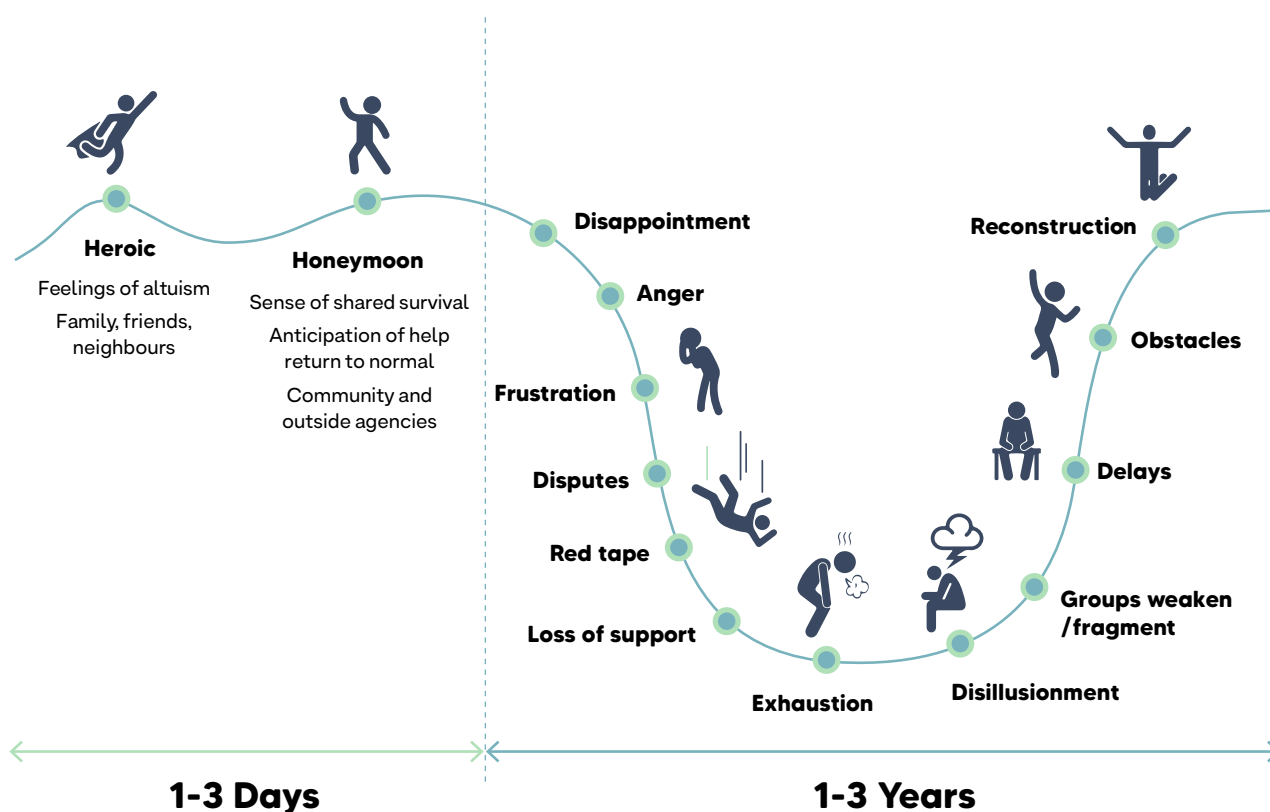
## What flood traumatised young people need now.

There is still a long way to go for many young people. Research tells us that the mental health impacts from disasters often don't truly manifest until 1-3 years after the event and those who have experienced trauma or losses in the past can be more adversely affected.

The benefit of the Human Nature model is that it is highly adaptive - we can change quickly according to the community's needs. In the early phases it was about emergency mental health first aid to ensure people felt safe and supported. Now, we are providing both one on one and group therapy in schools and other locations and finding ways to build connections with those young people who are reluctant to seek help. With established community connections amongst counsellors, Out of Home Care services, Distance Education, GPs and

parents, we are already receiving referrals for those in most urgent need. By addressing their long term trauma we will enable young people to re-engage with education, employment and social support.

There is also an intense need for more practical support as families struggle to navigate the complex and inadequate government grants and emergency response systems. Many young people and their families are still homeless, their schools are closed and their communities are decimated. Until their basic needs are met, their ability to successfully engage with therapeutic support is severely diminished. Our team of mental health professionals are committed to be there in whatever capacity they need us.



Different phases that individuals and communities might experience post disaster adapted from Cohen and Ahearn 1980 and DeWolfe 2000



# Our supporters.

Human Nature is grateful for the generous support of our many and varied donors. Without it we would not have survived the challenges of past years and be where we are today. Philanthropic support comes with great trust and great flexibility, allowing us to quickly change and adapt, to innovate and to do whatever is needed to get a positive outcome for the young people we work with.

## Youth Flood Trauma Recovery Appeal supporters.



## Our donors.

John Akehurst  
AON Charitable Foundation  
Aledal Foundation  
Nikki Beaumont  
Savannah Boller  
Byron Snack Factory  
Flannery Foundation  
Greater Bank  
Anita Groos  
Hodges House - Shore School  
Richard Hirst  
Lisa Joel  
Michael S Jonas  
Riika Lampinen  
George Lewin Foundation  
Light Earth Foundation  
Macpac  
Andrew Mansfield  
Paskeville Foundation  
Priceline Pharmacy  
Ros & Richard Rogers  
Santos Organics  
Belinda Seaton  
SmartAID  
Uechtritz Family Foundation

**We would also like to offer our immense gratitude to everyone who has donated in the last year. However big or small, your support matters to young people.**

## Our grantors.

ABC Heywire  
Coles  
Cliniko  
CommBank Foundation  
James Frizelle Charitable Foundation  
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal  
Future2 Foundation  
inGrained Foundation  
NSW Office for Regional Youth  
NSW Department of Communities & Justice  
Northern Rivers Community Foundation  
Seaton Foundation  
St George Foundation



# Donor Statement.

## Belinda Seaton.

When I first came across Human Nature in 2015, I was incredibly impressed by the impact that a small organisation was achieving. In the seven years that I've been involved, that impact has increased so much more.

It's a very different organisation now and it's been exciting for me to watch it grow from strength to strength, evolving and adapting to meet the needs of our young people, whilst maintaining the essence of what makes it unique and that's what we love to see as a Foundation.

It's such a great model and I would love for the government and other donors and funders to get involved and look at what's actually being achieved. It would be wonderful if lots of funding was made available to Human Nature so they could duplicate the model and offer it in other areas of Australia where our youth are struggling and are in desperate need of support for their mental health and wellbeing.

Every young person and every experience, every trauma is going to be different. Some may be a little bit simpler and some just so much more complex. There's no other service out there that can tailor their approach like Human Nature can; that can adapt their programs to what young people truly, really need and how they would like to receive that support.

A couple of the young participants came to speak with our board post COVID-19 and we asked them what would have happened if they weren't able to get support during that time. We were surprised at their openness to the question and they said that without the support of the HNAT team during that time, things would have been very different.

We love what Human Nature does. We love the stories. We love seeing the impact.



# Our governance.

## Our Board of Directors.

Human Nature is governed by a highly skilled Board of Directors; six professionals who provide governance, leadership, business and financial expertise to strengthen and steer the organisation.

**Scott Beachley** Chair

**Brenda Wraight** Deputy Chair

**Lea Clothier** Treasurer

**John Akehurst** Director

**Hugo Hayes** Director

**Stephen Grant** Director.

In the past year, Sandi Middleton and Troy Mason retired from the Board. Their contributions have been greatly appreciated.

## It's been an extraordinary year.

A lot of words can describe it. Resilience gets used a lot. Unprecedented too. It was a year that tested everyone and everything. Immense loss and heartbreak were met in the aftermath of the late summer floods by phenomenal community effort. Human Nature and the young people we serve experienced it – deeply, personally, collectively. The impact continues to hurt while we all seek to heal.

The resolve and fortitude of the young people we care for to stay the course was truly remarkable. The perseverance and courage displayed by the Human Nature team to carry on through the toughest times was exceptional. The continuing generous support and encouragement of our funding community, many personally affected by events themselves, enabled us to continue when other organisations were not so fortunate.

What does the future hold? Less rain and pandemic disruption, we can all hope. What we know for sure is we're in the midst of a youth mental health crisis. More than ever in the Northern Rivers and across Australia we have an enormous problem growing at a rapid rate. Now, we know that what we do works and we must be proud of the role we play in young people's lives – but we are also humbled knowing that the demand for what we do is far beyond our capacity to serve. There is so much more we can do, more young people and places we can reach. That is our mission today and for the future.

As a board we are incredibly grateful to all the young people with whom we cross paths and to the Human Nature team walking alongside them, often through dark times.

Finally, thank you to our kind, loving and generous funding community. You make the incredible possible. We can only nurture flourishing young lives with your grace and we cherish you being with us on the journey.

**Scott Beachley,**  
Board Chair



## Clinical Governance Council members.

The purpose of the Clinical Governance Council is to provide independent, considered and objective specialist clinical governance and therapeutic advice and expertise, thought leadership and recommendations to the Human Nature Board of Directors and management. It addresses the need for appropriate organisation-wide clinical and therapeutic governance for Human Nature's service related activities:

**Dr Caroline (Carlie) Atkinson**

**Dr Richard Lakeman**

**Sharnie Roberts**

**Dr Will Dobud** (Clinical Social Worker, Adventure Therapist)

**Samantha James** (Clinical Psychologist)

**Andy Hamilton** (Psychologist)

**Jennifer Parke** (Social Worker)

**Brenda Wraight**

# Financial snapshot.

We are proud of the strength of our model and are now poised to take it to more and more young people in order to meet ever-increasing demand. To this end, we are focussed on building our financial sustainability and our ability to attract multi-year funding support.

A first major step – and a significant achievement – was the selection of Human Nature (from a field of 175 remarkable organisations) by Future Generation Global (FGG) as one of its 14 impact partners. FGG will provide us with three years funding to continue developing our organisational foundations in readiness for expansion. This grant will also support us to work with social impact measurement specialists to build an impact framework to track our impact in wellbeing and prevention, enabling us to be ready for the next phase of our development.

As a direct result of the catastrophic floods, we have also been successful in securing two competitive government grants to support the provision of direct services to flood affected young people, continuing the work that we commenced with the support of generous philanthropic donations. These grants are significant in that they will allow us to build stronger relationships with both the Department of Communities and Justice and Healthy North Coast – the local Primary Health Network.

A corporate partnership strategy, with a view to securing a suite of partnerships with organisations that share our passion for supporting young people to change the trajectory of their lives, will further support our long term sustainability.

Human Nature remains heavily reliant on philanthropy, with 82% of revenue in this financial year being provided by donations. This figure was particularly high as a result of the generous support we received to provide immediate support in the post-flood period.



# Statement of Financial Position.

As at 30 June 2022

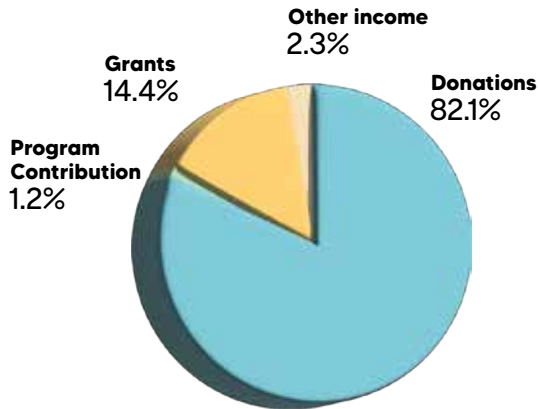
	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash equivalents	1,004,766	805,144
Trade and other receivables	24,048	11,733
Financial assets	-	87,261
Other assets	4,608	26,165
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>1,033,422</b>	<b>930,303</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	-	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,033,422</b>	<b>930,303</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	32,715	44,948
Employee benefits	55,647	40,993
Grant received in advance	116,012	37,546
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>204,374</b>	<b>123,487</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits	6,677	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>211,051</b>	<b>123,487</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>822,371</b>	<b>806,816</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Accumulated surplus	822,371	806,816
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>822,371</b>	<b>806,816</b>

# Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ending 30 June 2022

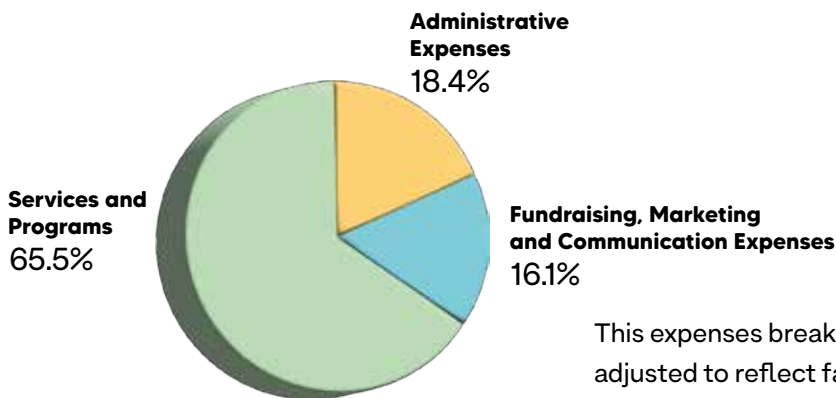
	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	1,385,327	1,263,646
Other income	913	4,804
Employee benefits expense	(983,519)	(694,213)
Program expenses	(148,764)	(139,906)
Administrative expenses	(238,401)	(266,303)
Finance costs	(1)	(2)
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>	<b>15,555</b>	<b>168,026</b>
Income tax expense	-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>15,555</b>	<b>168,026</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>15,555</b>	<b>168,026</b>

## Financial Year 2021-22 Revenue.



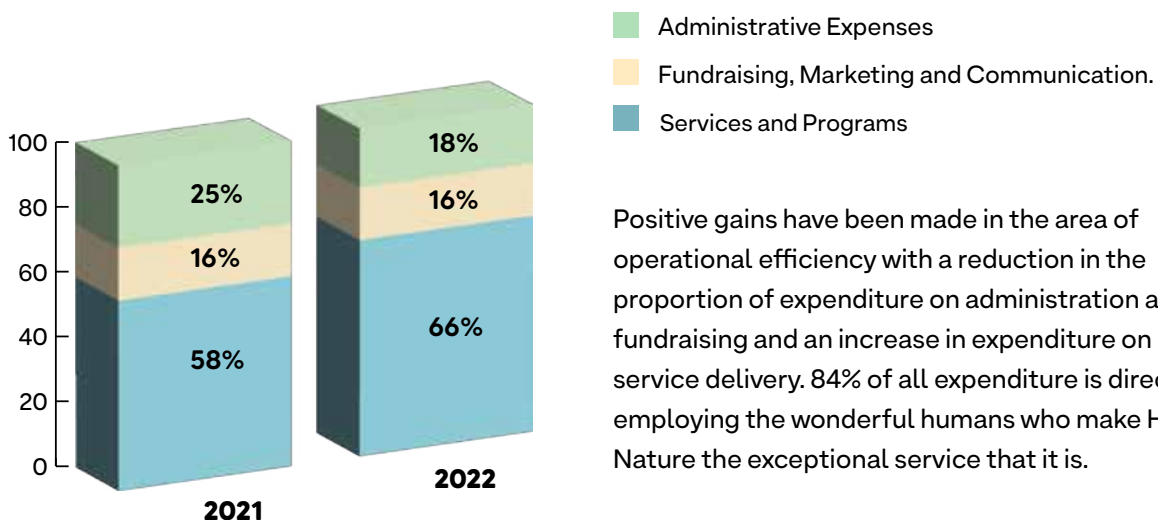
Revenue and expenditure in the past two financial years have been distorted by one-off government payments and grants related to COVID-19 and Flood Recovery.

## Financial Year 2021-22 Expense Breakdown\*.



This expenses breakdown has been adjusted to reflect factual expenses, and will allow comparison over time.

## 2021 & 2022.



Positive gains have been made in the area of operational efficiency with a reduction in the proportion of expenditure on administration and fundraising and an increase in expenditure on direct service delivery. 84% of all expenditure is directed to employing the wonderful humans who make Human Nature the exceptional service that it is.





**We empower young people  
to navigate life's challenges  
- transforming trauma and  
disadvantage into healing  
and growth.**

**Human Nature Adventure Therapy Ltd**

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[connect@humannature.org.au](mailto:connect@humannature.org.au)

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