

2023 IMPACT REPORT



A BETTER FUTURE



Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge and show respect for 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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Introduction

Chair and Chief Executive Officer's message

As many of you know, 2022 saw those of us living in the Northern Rivers face a flood of catastrophic proportions, at least in our lifetime. This followed the unprecedented events of early 2020 – devastating bushfires that impacted every state and territory in Australia and the global COVID-19 pandemic – creating personal and economic hardship throughout our tight-knit community.

Now we are all trying to navigate our way through a much more uncertain world with increasing cost of living pressures and the effects of climate change.

Despite these challenges, we believe we can create a world where young people triumph over adversity and thrive.



Human Nature remains committed to pursuing our Strategic Plan and working towards our mission to empower young people to navigate life's challenges – transforming trauma and disadvantage into healing and growth.

The theme of our 2023 Impact Report is “A better future”. This reflects our optimism that, despite consecutive traumatic events in 2020, 2021 and 2022, our work can significantly improve the lives of young people facing mental health challenges in the Northern Rivers.

Key achievements

Selection as a Social Impact Partner by Future Generation Global which brings with it a **multi-year funding agreement**.

Embedding impact measurement and service improvement into our services using the Outcomes Star model and Feedback Informed Therapy.

Redesigning our signature offering, Recre8, to ensure the expedition program continues to meet the needs of young people and is efficient and self-sufficient.

Redefining our intake assessment process to ensure improved safety of young people in providing long term care.

Secured State and Federal funding to deliver immediate flood recovery support.

A **staff satisfaction score of 4.5/5** which is critical for staff attraction and retention in an area of workforce shortage.

95% engagement rate with young people other services have been unable to reach.



Most importantly of all, we positively impacted more young lives than ever before. Over the last financial year we supported 130 young people, a 40% increase compared to the previous year.

It is satisfying to look back and see what we have achieved, despite the enormous challenges presented to us.

Thank you.

Many of these successes were only possible because of funding from Human Nature's supporters. We are extremely grateful to the individual donors, philanthropic trusts and foundations who supported us in the 2022-23 financial year, and we are humbled by their support during what has been a difficult time for all.

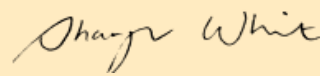
We'd also like to extend our appreciation to the organisations we work with and who refer clients to us - the school student support staff, teachers, youth services, out of home care agencies, Government Departments and parents that care deeply about the young people in their orbit and want to set them on a trajectory towards a better future.

We value our talented and committed team at Human Nature. Their dedication to supporting young people suffering from mental ill health, and their families, is truly inspiring.

We are thankful also to our Ambassador, Mandy Nolan, for continuing to advocate passionately for our work in addition to her many other commitments in our community. Special thanks also to the members of our Board and Clinical Governance Council who enthusiastically give up their time throughout the year to ensure we can continue to deliver on our vision and mission while maintaining strong governance.

To all of the young people supported by Human Nature, we are in awe of your commitment to overcome the many challenges you face. Thank you for positively responding to the support provided by our services and programs. Seeing the changes you make to create a better future for yourselves gives us purpose to continue our work.

Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of our young people.



Sharyn White
Chief Executive Officer



Stephen Grant
Chair

Founder statement

Andy Hamilton

It is with a great deal of pride, and respect for our amazing team and incredible young people, that I reflect on our past year and how we have grown. Despite the plethora of seemingly unrelenting challenges we have all been facing, we stand strong on the solid foundations we have built, looking forward to the future.

We are fueled by the painful awareness that the need for a better way to support young people is greater than ever. However, we are inspired by feedback, from both clients and sector colleagues, that our unique model of care is effective and is significantly reducing the tragic consequences of trauma and disadvantage.

Human Nature was born in 2015, out of the heartbreaking recognition that those young people most likely to suffer dire and tragic outcomes, are often least likely to engage in conventional clinical support structures – they simply aren't getting the help that they need because the help on offer is often not refined and attuned to meet them where they are at, and to work at their pace.

We now stand with a carefully crafted model that demonstrably works, having a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable young people and their families in our region – and poised with the capacity to expand our local impact.

We have long witnessed more and more shocking numbers of young people in the grips of mental distress, disengagement, addiction, criminal behaviour, violence, self-harm and suicide, and wondered why. It is time we recognise these as the serious symptoms of trauma that they are and to start to properly treat them as such. Without such a radical shift, victims continue to become perpetrators and heartbreak and hopelessness perpetuates in our communities.

Dreaming big is not only a luxury we have in this free and privileged society of ours – but a moral obligation and a necessity when it comes to shifting the abhorrent reality of societal disintegration we currently find ourselves in. As a community, we have the resources to turn things around. Now, we must find the will to direct them towards innovative ways of protecting our young people and supporting them to thrive – to put an end to the intergenerational cycles of suffering that are perpetuated by allowing our most vulnerable to continue to fall through the gaps and becoming another statistic.

I thank you for your extraordinary support in this endeavour thus far, and I implore you to join us in amplifying our efforts so that we can turn this ripple into a tidal wave of change that sees us celebrating a compassionate and inspired society.

Andy Hamilton
Founder and
Therapeutic Lead



Our story

Human Nature has been dedicated to providing innovative, nature-based mental health support to young people aged 14-18 across the Far North Coast since 2015.

All young people, regardless of their circumstances, deserve the opportunity to access mental health support that truly meets their needs, setting them on a positive trajectory to become valued contributors to our society. Yet many are missing out. They have tried to get support but it's either too costly, too far away or hasn't worked for them. For many, the significant challenges in their lives mean that they simply can't bring themselves to get through the door of a clinical office to sit down with a therapist.

That's why we've developed an innovative model of care that works to build therapeutic alliances with young people who conventional services have failed to engage. We offer evidence-based mental health support, delivered by qualified mental health professionals and experienced youth workers that takes place outside of clinical settings.





Through offering exciting and fun adventures in nature, we are able to engage young people in the therapeutic support they often urgently need – evidenced by our remarkable 95% engagement rate. We create safe and supportive environments, where young people often feel more able to open up and share their stories, helping them to overcome past trauma, build resilience, and develop the skills they need to thrive.

We're passionate about making a lasting impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the young people we work with. The early interventions we provide can change their life trajectory and

prevent them from encounters with responses like emergency psychiatric care, the criminal justice system and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. By keeping them engaged with school, work, family, friends and wider support services we enable them to get on top of their mental health challenges.

Armed with the evidence that our services work, we are committed to supporting even more of the ever-growing number of young people faced with significant life challenges to reach their full potential.

Our purpose

Human Nature exists to empower young people to navigate life's challenges - transforming trauma and disadvantage into healing and growth.

Our strategic pillars

Our plan

Programs and Growth	People and Culture	Purpose, Partnerships Sustainability	Process and Governance
Grow a dynamic, responsive & resilient suite of nature-connected programs that are youth-centered, evidence-informed & culturally intelligent	Embed an empowering culture of wellness, growth, collaboration, resilience, reflection & excellence, developing teams, strategies and priorities that support each team member and volunteer to deliver on our mission & thrive in their role	Develop clarity around Human Nature's purpose & unique approach to youth wellness, defining how we grow our presence and thought leadership in the sector and achieve financial sustainability through mutually rewarding partnerships	Invest in robust, fit for purpose and values-driven internal systems, processes & policies to ensure Human Nature is operating optimally & safely

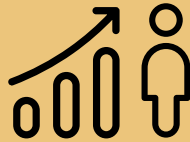


The last year at a glance

Key statistics from the 2022-2023 financial year.

191% INCREASE

in the number of clients
accepted into our programs



SUPPORTED 130

young people in 2022/23 FY
96 of those were new clients



**95% OF
YOUNG PEOPLE**

engaged in at least
10 sessions



\$449,947

in government grants

\$206,644

in philanthropic grants

\$1,099,014

in donations

Demographics

2022/2023

% Aboriginal



Age



Gender identity



Local government area



* Other

5% of young people identify as Culturally and Linguistically diverse

5% identify as LGBTIQ+



Nurturing healing journeys: a therapist's perspective

My work at Human Nature is transformative, both for me as a therapist and for the young people I've had the privilege of supporting.

Human Nature's unique approach to mental health care, which emphasises client-led therapy, flexibility and the therapeutic power of nature, has allowed me to foster meaningful connections with young people and witness firsthand the profound impact that personalised and holistic care can have on their lives.

Human Nature empowers young people to take an active role in their healing journey

One of the most distinctive aspects of Human Nature's practice is the client-centred approach. Unlike conventional therapeutic models that often dictate the pace and direction of treatment, Human Nature empowers young people to take an active role in their healing journey. I've found that this approach not only builds trust and rapport but also allows me to tailor my approach to each individual's unique needs and preferences.

This flexible and customised way of working has been instrumental in my ability to connect with young people who may not respond well to traditional therapy settings. I've met with young people in parks, community centres and their homes, wherever they feel comfortable and safe

to open up and express themselves. This approach has also allowed me to incorporate activities that align with their interests, whether it's hiking, playing sports, or engaging in creative pursuits.

I've witnessed firsthand how immersing young people in the natural world can have a profound impact on their well-being. The soothing sounds of nature, the fresh air, and the sense of connection to something larger than oneself can foster relaxation, reduce stress, and promote a sense of calm.

What sets Human Nature apart, I believe, is that we recognise that young people's challenges are often interconnected with family dynamics and social factors. We work with families and systems when appropriate, allowing us to address underlying issues that may be contributing to the young person's struggles, creating a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to healing.

The primary outcomes I strive to achieve in my work are simple yet profound: to reduce suffering, foster self-awareness, strengthen relationships, and empower young people to reach their full potential. I've had the privilege of witnessing countless moments of transformation, from seeing a young person's face light up with newfound optimism to witnessing them take their first steps towards achieving their goals.

I am continually humbled by the resilience and strength of the young people I work with. Their stories continue to inspire me and remind me of the profound impact we can have on their lives.



Our impact for young people

1

IF WE...

work at the pace of trust in settings where young people are most comfortable, and remove barriers to participation in therapeutic support

2

YOUNG PEOPLE WILL...

have improved wellbeing, social connection and a sense of belonging

be equipped to manage their wellbeing and seek help to improve their mental health when needed

3

SO THAT THEY CAN...

overcome adversity and thrive

Human Nature works with young people who are experiencing significant life challenges, including anxiety, depression, childhood trauma, drug and alcohol problems, behavioural difficulties, educational challenges and social exclusion.

We know that therapy works, but we also know that adolescents are the least likely group to seek help or to access professional care for mental health problems.

Human Nature exists to solve the engagement conundrum in youth mental health. We have a remarkable 95% engagement rate, which means that at least 95% of young people who come to Human Nature stay for at least 10 sessions or more. Research shows that the minimum number of sessions to achieve therapeutic benefit is six or more.

Human Nature is unique in providing mental health support to young people in a way that is accessible, flexible and person-centred. Support that is delivered by practitioners who are deeply committed to listening to young people and understanding their unique needs.

We know that therapeutic outcomes are heavily reliant on the therapeutic alliance so we emphasise and optimise engagement. Working at the pace of trust, young people are able to engage with therapy and mentoring at the intensity and duration they need.

The setting, content and frequency of our therapeutic interventions are co-designed with the young people themselves. Human Nature clinicians use a 'whatever it takes' approach to enable clients' participation and work with young people predominantly in non-clinical settings.

Our partnership with Future Generation Global has allowed us to focus on developing our Theory of Change and to introduce a consistent set of outcome measures so we can track our impact.





Outcome measurement

My Mind Star

My Mind Star is designed for use in early intervention youth mental health services like ours. Using this tool, we can track our participants' progress in a range of areas directly related to the impact we strive for.



Healthy lifestyle



Feelings and emotions



Where you live



Friends and relationships



School, training, work



How you use your time



Self-esteem

Each young person completes a Star with their therapist or mentor within their first four meetings and then approximately every three months.



Jasper's* Mindstar

Jasper, like many young people, faced challenges with his mental health. With the help of his mentor and the Mind Star tool, Jasper was able to identify areas he wanted to focus on, including improving his sleep habits, recognising unhelpful thinking, reducing cannabis use, and finding alternative education options.

Completing the Star also enabled Jasper to see and celebrate that a source of strength for him was where he lives and his family, as his mum had found a long term rental property after being made homeless by the floods.

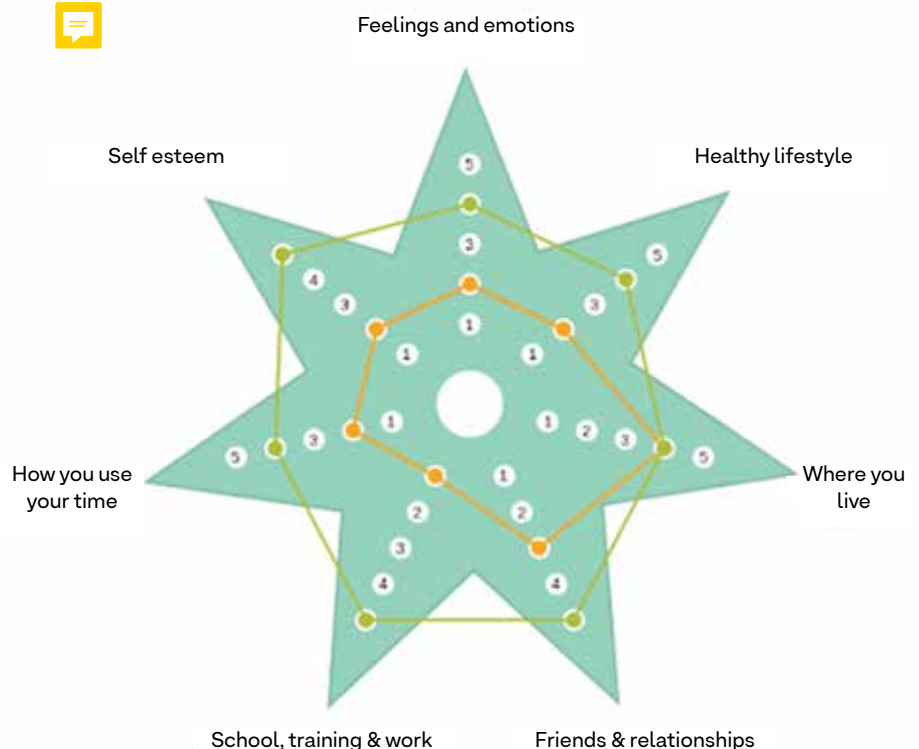
Four months later, Jasper completed a new Mind Star (green). In that time, Jasper had been supported to start TAFE and was loving it, which had improved his friends and relationships and self esteem, and he had reduced cannabis use which impacted positively on his diet, sleep and feelings and emotions.



Jasper saw his mentor fortnightly for another two months and then was exited into the Elev8 program, where he could remain connected with Human Nature through our group activities and the support of peers with lived experience.

For each of the seven areas, young people, with their therapist or mentor, choose the answer that best suits how they feel most of the time, based on this scale:

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



Orange line - initial Star
Green line - after four months



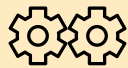
Young people's progress with Human Nature

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



94%

of young people are making progress in at least **ONE** outcome area



88%

of young people are making progress in at least **TWO** outcome areas



76%

of young people are making progress in at least **THREE** outcome areas



76%

of young people are making progress with school, training and work



64%

of young people are making progress with feelings and emotions



55%

of young people are making progress with friends and relationships



52%

of young people are making progress with self esteem



55%

of young people are making progress with a healthy lifestyle



48%

of young people are making progress with where they live



52%

of young people are making progress with how they use their time

This year's data shows young people are making less progress in all outcome areas than we saw in our previous years' data. This is for a range of reasons: in the past year we have solidified data collection and now include data from all young people in our service, capturing those with much more complex needs, something that we are seeing overall in our referrals.

There is also a huge amount of research pointing to an escalating youth mental health crisis, and a significant increase in probable serious mental illness amongst rural young people from 20.9% to 27%¹.

With all this in mind, the levels of engagement and the outcomes young people are achieving are sources of great pride for us.





Outcome measurement

Feedback Informed Therapy

Human Nature also measures the impact we are having for young people through Feedback Informed Therapy. This is an evidence-based practice where practitioners gather real-time input from clients using structured measures to identify what is and isn't working in therapy and then adjust to better meet clients' needs. There are two measures - the Outcome Rating Scale and the Session Rating Scale. Using these measures allows us to compare our outcomes against international clinical standards and are a key tool in our bi-monthly therapeutic case reviews for each client.

The Outcomes Rating Scale is used at the beginning of every session. The young person rates how things are going since their therapist or mentor last saw them in terms of their personal wellbeing, their family/ close relationships, work/ school and friendships and overall sense of wellbeing. This enables practitioners to set a clear focus for the session and is one of the tools we use in co-designing the support each young person receives from Human Nature.

¹K. Cairns, S. Garlick Bock, K. Guinta, L. Welland, B. Kahl, H. Miller, E. Gibbs, H. Ellis, N. Guan, & M. Nicholas (2021). 'Supported, educated and understood': Impact on the Wellbeing of Young People Living in Regional, Rural and Remote Australia. Sydney: ReachOut Australia

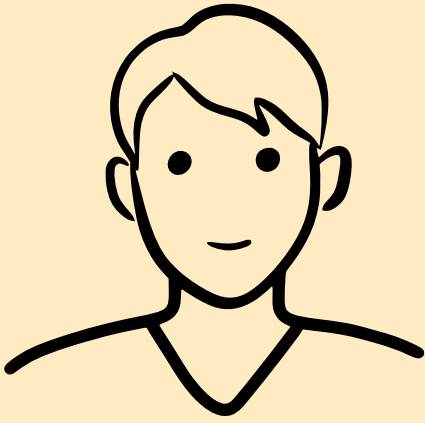
The Session Rating Scale is completed at the end of every session and gives us real-time feedback about how the young person felt the session went for them and whether it met their needs. This feedback is important in allowing us to establish the strong therapeutic relationships with young people that lead to positive outcomes.

Using these measures we can monitor how each young person is tracking against scores derived from nearly three-quarters-of-a-million other users. Based on this information we are able to adjust our approach as needed, including identifying if more intensive services are required or if they are ready to join our step down program Elev8.

Client improvement

Domains	% showing any improvement
Individually	67%
Interpersonally	50%
Socially	83%
Overall	67%
Total ORS	83%





Impact story

Tyson's journey: from trauma to triumph

When Tyson* first came to Human Nature he had withdrawn from his friends and family, stopped attending school and lost interest in the things that used to bring him joy like music and skating. He'd endured a childhood marked with domestic violence and sexual abuse and had become reliant on cannabis as a coping mechanism. His worried mum reached out to us and we began the therapeutic journey.

At the beginning, Tyson was resistant and withdrawn during sessions. He'd often cancel appointments at the last minute. However, we were committed to creating a space where Tyson felt valued and heard. We took the time to understand his unique needs and by providing reminders, flexible scheduling options and activities aligned with his interests we were able to gain his trust and motivate him to engage in therapeutic support.

Tyson was doing really well, he was beginning to set goals for himself that included reducing his cannabis use, was skating regularly and having more meals with the family. Then in February

2022, Tyson's life was completely upended by the devastating floods our region suffered. Tyson and his family lost all their belongings when their rented home flooded and were suddenly homeless and emotionally shattered.

The mental health impact on Tyson was severe. He was back smoking significant quantities of cannabis and his past traumas had been triggered by the many volunteers and tradespeople coming to the house. He was reluctant to engage in therapy anymore but his therapist continued to visit, providing practical support such as helping his mum apply for emergency assistance and delivering donated items, allowing Tyson to observe that someone was there for him but without pressure.

Eventually Tyson felt safe enough to start regular sessions again. He told us that having someone who'd not given up on him had given him a strong sense of trust.

The sessions recommenced with drives to scenic lookouts, where Tyson and his therapist would sit and talk or take a short walk. By creating a safe space where Tyson could express his vulnerabilities and navigate his emotions, we were able to create a strong therapeutic relationship that enabled Tyson to start making positive changes in his life.

At Human Nature, our commitment to empowering young people extends beyond therapy sessions. We introduced Tyson to a Therapeutic Mentor and together they worked on practical steps for Tyson's future, including securing a job and building up his confidence and self esteem. Through philanthropic support we were able to purchase him a bike, giving him independence and transport to access more employment opportunities. It also meant he could go on bike rides with his mentor before pulling up in a park to work on his resume and identify suitable places to apply for work.

Over the course of 15 months Tyson attended over 50 appointments demonstrating remarkable progress and resilience. He has since been on

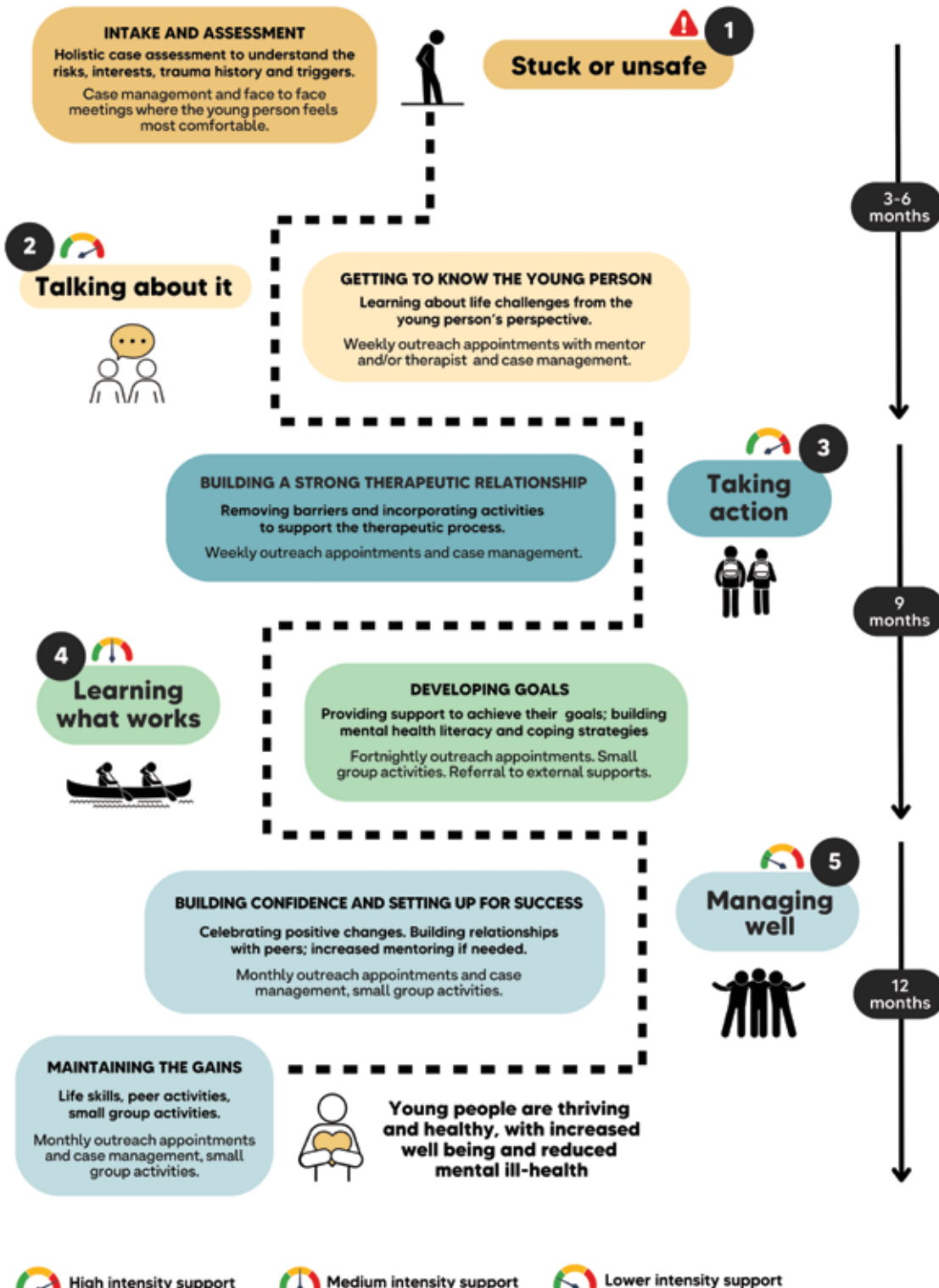
a three-day canoeing camp and a five-night expedition accompanied by our therapeutic team and other young people. Throughout these experiences, Tyson has exhibited natural leadership qualities. He's supported fellow participants, shared humor and exuded infectious energy. In our campfire conversations and his one-on-one interactions, Tyson displays remarkable insight into his therapeutic journey, articulating clear steps toward maintaining his progress, further solidifying his growth and healing from the trauma of his childhood.

Tyson's journey with us has been one from trauma to triumph. Our innovative approach and tailored solutions have played a vital role in empowering Tyson's path to recovery.

*Name changed for confidentiality



A young person's journey with Human Nature



Capitalism for social good

Future
Generation
Global

Our CEO, Sharyn White sat down with one of our major supporters, Future Generation Global, to hear why they chose to support our work

Q

Sharyn: With so many problems facing our society, what was Future Generation Global (FGG) established to achieve?

Caroline: FGG was set up in 2015 by Geoff Wilson with the aim of improving long-term mental health outcomes for young people.

Our original charity partners proposed projects requiring five years of support from 2016 to 2020. However, in 2020, conscious of the increasing demand for support from young people and the monumental reform challenges facing the mental health sector, we felt compelled to review our strategic focus to ensure we were maximising our impact for young Australians.

Q

Sharyn: With the pandemic raging, straight off the back of the Black Summer bushfires, mental health services and helplines were seeing huge surges in demand.

This was a period of vast change and upheaval. How did you approach your strategic review in this context?

Caroline: We set out to answer two questions.

Firstly, within youth mental health, what should we invest in to generate the greatest social return for our contribution? And secondly, how should we invest to ensure our dollars are put to the best use?

Ultimately, we looked to identify an area that, with our investment, would have high potential to create social good, but that was overlooked or under-funded by others, particularly governments.

Q

Sharyn: I can imagine there were a lot of findings, particularly in light of the Productivity Commission Mental Health Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System both exposing an underperforming mental healthcare system. Overall, what did your research discover?

Caroline: In a nutshell, we found that decades of reform in mental healthcare and increases in government funding has not reduced the prevalence of mental health conditions. In fact, these conditions are increasing among young people. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that 40% of 16 to 24 year-olds had a mental disorder in 2020, up from 26% in 2006.



When we look at the burden of different diseases among different age groups, it is young people who bear the vast bulk of mental ill-health, with 75% of conditions starting before the age of 25.

And, tragically, suicide continues to be the leading cause of death for young Australians aged 15 to 24 years.

Clearly, the approach our nation has been taking with mental health – which is largely treating problems clinically when they become acute – is not working for young Australians. We knew we needed to direct our investment elsewhere.

Despite this bleak outlook, when we looked at the key trends in terms of where mental health is going, we actually found cause for optimism. We saw consistent themes about increasing consumer control and direction by those with lived experience, personalisation, blended models of care and a broadening of the view of mental health beyond its medicalisation.

We started to see a picture of the future – where mental health would increasingly focus on optimising wellbeing; would be more proactive, person-led and personalised; and would blend clinical and non-clinical aspects. We wanted to see young people given the knowledge and tools to drive their own wellbeing, as well as access to the right additional care if they needed it.

Sharyn: And in this future, where did you see you could invest in to generate the greatest social return?

Caroline: All roads lead to prevention and wellbeing. Many common mental health conditions are preventable. The research shows it is more cost effective to prevent than to treat.

Then, of course, we would all choose to spare a young person and their loved ones the experience of mental ill-health. So it makes sense from both a financial and moral perspective.

Australia has a great track record of reducing the cost of many other health conditions – from skin cancer and heart disease to diabetes – by investing in prevention as well as improving treatments. Yet, prevention has not had that focus in mental health policy to date.

Combined, Australian governments spend only around 1% (of approximately \$10 billion) of their mental health budgets on prevention.

We see wellbeing and prevention as a huge opportunity for philanthropy to really make an impact by supporting promising approaches and building the evidence-base to make the case to future governments for greater investment.

Sharyn: What about your second question – how you should invest so that your dollars work as hard as possible? It must have been an incredibly competitive process.

Caroline: Indeed it was – we received 175 applicants from all over Australia! Our aim is to back high potential not-for-profits and invest in those not-for-profits to realise impact growth.

We looked for partners with strong track records in their work, but still enough “runway” to significantly deepen their impact. In reality, that meant small to medium-sized organisations that don’t receive a lot of government funding.



We also looked for a certain drive and mindset – organisations that champion young people, which are courageous in pushing the status quo, and which are collaborative and committed to continuous improvement.

In the end, Human Nature was one of 14 impact partners we selected. And we are delighted to support your work.



Sharyn: And did you have an aim for the overall portfolio of partners you selected?

Caroline: Absolutely! We aimed to balance risk and return through diversity, so we put together a group of organisations that are all pushing for the same outcome, but getting there in different ways and bringing something unique to the table.

Combined, our partners needed to give us a national footprint, with at least 30 per cent being based in regional areas. And they needed to sit across both the wellbeing and the prevention spectrum.

We selected some partners offering universal or primary prevention, which targets all young people. They can reach big numbers, but there is also some ‘impact wastage’ because not all young people need this support.

To balance this, we also selected partners offering selected and indicated prevention, which focus on young people at known risk or already showing early signs of mental ill-health. They work with smaller numbers of young people who all need support – so there is less wastage and potentially deeper impact. Human Nature is a perfect example of this type of partner.



Sharyn: There is a lot of debate in the philanthropy sector around tied versus untied funding. How do you believe funders can invest for greatest impact?

Caroline: We support each partner for at least three years with untied funding. We believe multi-year and untied funding is best practice.

We don’t begin to hold ourselves out as experts in youth mental health. Our carefully selected partners understand the needs of the young people they work with and are far better placed than we’ll ever be to determine how our funding will deliver the greatest impact.

Consistency enables our partners to plan and retain staff with certainty. They can focus on their core job, instead of being distracted by fundraising.

Using a sophisticated impact measurement framework, we are excited to see the results of each partners’ progress, as well as, their aggregate impact in our portfolio of impact partners.

Sharyn: On behalf of the team at Human Nature we are truly grateful for Future Generation Global’s investment in our work. These types of innovative models enable more people to play a meaningful role in solving our many social challenges.

Thank you.



Programs designed by young people for young people

We constantly adjust how we work in response to feedback from young people. This keeps our services relevant and responsive to changing needs. The past year has clearly demonstrated the benefits of having flexible and responsive programs that can quickly adapt to changes in the community. The high, and growing, demand for our services has strengthened our commitment to make sure we are as efficient and sustainable as possible.

130

Young people were supported by our programs in 2022/23

New participants were welcomed into the service

96

101

Young people participated in the Activ8 program

Young people participated in Elev8

35

20

Young people participated in a Recre8 program

Percent increase in the number of groups

86

6988

Estimated Therapeutic Hours provided



PROGRAMS DESIGNED
BY YOUNG PEOPLE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Activ8

One-on-one and group therapeutic sessions

We were able to consistently and flexibly respond to the changing needs of young people through our Activ8 program as the community moved from the immediate crisis response after the floods and the impacts of widespread trauma began to emerge.

101 young people participated in the Activ8 program

Introduced a group session pilot to respond to demand in the Richmond Valley

Recruited an Aboriginal Therapeutic Mentor to allow us to better support Aboriginal participants

18% of Activ8 clients identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

We received **\$440,000 of grants** from Healthy North Coast and NSW Department of Communities and Justice to provide immediate relief to flood affected young people. This provided us with the confidence to expand our service delivery.

Conducted short group camps to provide **intensive therapeutic support.**

The majority of **referrals came from school staff**, then parents, non-Government agencies and Government services such as child protection and juvenile justice.





Recre8

Our therapeutic expedition program

Human Nature has a proud history of providing immersive therapeutic expeditions. However, the past few years have made 10 day expeditions challenging to plan and deliver. We identified a need for greater flexibility, enabling us to be nimble and have the ability to change plans to respond to unforeseen circumstances like border shutdowns, bushfires and floods. We also noticed an increased reluctance of young people to commit to a 10 day experience.

In late 2022 the decision was made to pilot a shorter 5 day program that could be delivered completely in-house. 10 young people participated in the inaugural 5 day Recre8 program and their feedback continues to shape refinements as the pilot continues.

20

Young people participated in expeditions in 2022/23

45%

Of Recre8 participants identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

2

Expeditions offered
Moreton Island (10 days)
Giraween National Park (5 days)



The shorter five day format made gaining commitment from participants easier, was less disruptive to service provision and was more cost efficient. Participant feedback was substantially positive. Further refinements will be made to the design of expeditions the coming year to ensure that the therapeutic benefit can be maximised in the shorter format.



Elev8

Peer support community

Our Elev8 program provides a safe and supported exit point from our more intensive therapeutic support by creating a community of young people with lived experience. Through engaging group activities, facilitated by an experienced Therapeutic Mentor, young people remain connected to Human Nature and their peers, ensuring they remain supported through new challenges that may emerge during their mental health journey.



With the support of both the **Seaton Foundation** and the **James Frizelle Foundation**, we were able to introduce a dedicated staff member to grow this program, offering a regular calendar of outdoor activities with wellbeing support built in.

We delivered **nine group events** over the year with activities designed in collaboration with the young people. These included a beach picnic and weaving day for Aboriginal girls, a canoeing day, surf lessons, a garden party in our beautiful therapeutic garden, and an e-bike riding on the new rail trail.

This also included **three two-night camps** focusing on themes such as life transition skills and safely sharing stories of mental health recovery. The camps provided opportunities for nature connected activities such as surfing, picnicking by a waterfall, bush walking, and high ropes, as well as opportunities to connect and share stories around a campfire.

30 young people participated in these various events and activities. 30% of Elev8 participants identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The funding also enabled us to re-invigorate our **Youth Leadership Committee**. Bi-monthly meetings are held with a combination of in person and online. Members are young people who have exited Activ8 and are keen to have input into our model, service delivery and priorities, as well as develop their leadership skills.



Inspired giving

Extending our reach through a broader community of connections

Since Human Nature's inception in 2015, we have been committed to developing an important group of loyal supporters in our local community.

Thanks to the work of our founder, Andy Hamilton, and the relationships he developed over the years, Human Nature has been able to survive and thrive due to the generosity of these loyal supporters.

However, after consecutive natural disasters coupled with a global pandemic, the demand for Human Nature's services has exceeded what we are currently able to provide.

It's in this context that, in November 2022, thanks to an invitation from Lachie Bunn, Andy was given an opportunity to present Human Nature's story to the attendees of the Byron Boys Long Lunch, a quarterly event that brings together a group of men who live in the Byron shire.

Australians are known for supporting others and this was evident at the Byron Boys Long Lunch, where attendees rolled up their sleeves to join together and donate over \$17,000 to Human Nature on the day. We are truly grateful for this support.

However, despite this incredible act of generosity, we know that overall giving in Australia is at a record low in terms of percentage of GDP compared to other countries, leading some commentators in the charity sector to believe that the true potential of giving in this country is yet to be realised. At Human Nature, we believe we can harness this potential by engaging our donors (and prospective donors) more deeply in the impact of our work with young people in the Far North Coast.

At Human Nature, we are truly grateful for every donation, no matter the size, and we know that donors who are appropriately, personally and patiently cultivated can become enthusiastic advocates for Human Nature and its mission in the community, spreading good will and encouraging others to join in support.



An example of this was the introduction to one of our newest supporters, David Gynge, via the Byron Boys Long Lunch. David is an executive with over 25 years' of media experience, most recently as the CEO of Nine Entertainment from 2010 to 2015.

At the height of last year's disaster, David was instrumental in drawing the then NSW premier's attention to the slowness of the government's response and the joint telethon, which raised \$27 million for flood response efforts. Now, he wants to focus attention on the mental health crisis besetting the region's young after the floods.

As David shared with us, "I don't want to swan through life and lose sight of what's happening in our community, everyone is obliged to help."

It was also with David's support, together with his partner, Leila McKinnon, a television presenter and journalist that we were featured on A Current Affair. This story provided us with the opportunity to explain to Australians how our model works and the difference it made in the life of Ziggy, one of our young people who has been through our program and is now achieving many of her life goals.

Based on a review published in Current Directions in Psychological Science in 2022, we know that people who give to charity feel a boost of happiness but also that donors want to see the impact of their giving.

Since coming on board as one of our key supporters David has been instrumental in sharing this passion for Human Nature's work with friends and colleagues who have also joined Human Nature's growing community of supporters – significantly impacting our ability to maintain our existing level of programs and services for young people experiencing challenging life circumstances.

At Human Nature we are committed to communicating the impact of your generosity through this Annual Impact Report in the hope that it will inspire others in the community to join our community of supporters. With that in mind, our Head of Philanthropy, Sarah Rainbird, would be delighted to hear any feedback you might have about how we could improve the information we provide to donors.



Our board

We extend the deepest appreciation to our Board members who give their time and expertise to provide strategic direction and governance to Human Nature.

Stephen Grant, Board Chair

John Akehurst, Deputy Chair

Lea Clothier, Treasurer

Hugo Hayes

Kathleen Cator

Scott Beachley (Resigned on 15 December 2022)

Brenda Wright (Resigned on 15 December 2022)

Our executive team

Sharyn White

CEO



Andy Hamilton

Founder and
Therapeutic Lead



Jen Parke

Head of Operations



Joy Barber Hua

Head of Marketing
and Engagement



Sarah Rainbird

Head of Philanthropy



Financial snapshot

Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2023

ASSETS	Note	2023\$	2022\$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	1,434,220	1,004,766
Trade and other receivables	7	20,612	24,048
Other assets	8	8,744	4,608
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,463,576	1,033,422
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	9	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS		1,463,576	1,033,422
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	48,354	32,715
Employee benefits	11	60,985	55,647
Grant received in advance		311,405	116,012
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		420,744	204,374
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	11	7,817	6,677
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		7,817	6,677
TOTAL LIABILITIES		428,561	211,051
NET ASSETS		1,035,015	822,371
EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus		1,035,015	822,371
TOTAL EQUITY		1,035,015	822,371

Statement of profit or loss

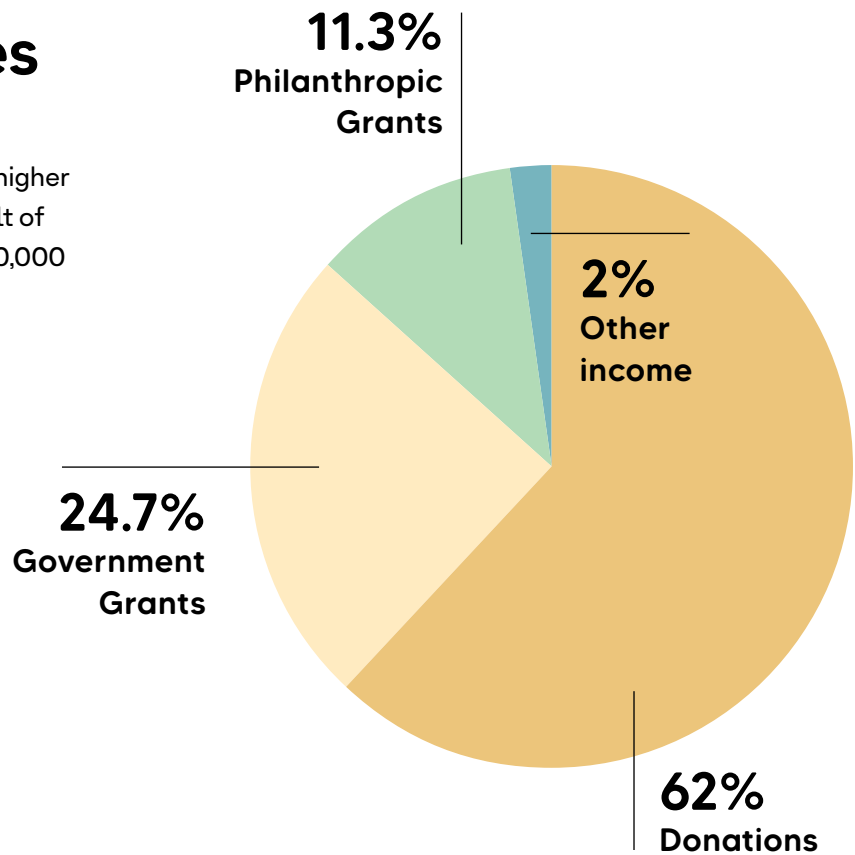
For the year ended 31 december 2021

	Note	2023\$	2022\$
Revenue	4	1,804,493	1,385,327
Other income	4	14,505	913
Employee benefits expense		(1,213,371)	(983,519)
Program expenses		(201,831)	(148,764)
Administrative expenses		(191,152)	(238,401)
Finance costs		-	(1)
Surplus before income tax		212,644	15,555
Income tax expense	2(c)	-	-
Surplus for the year		212,644	15,555
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		212,644	15,555



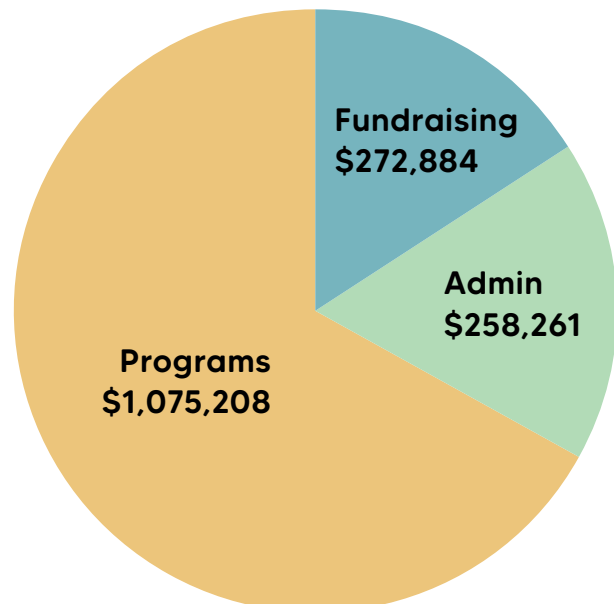
Income sources

Our grant income was significantly higher than previous years. This was a result of \$400,000 from government and \$50,000 from other sources.



Expense breakdown

Total expenses \$1,606,353



2022/23 Supporters and acknowledgements

Major Donors

David Gyngell & Leila McKinnon
Lisa Joel
George Lewin (George Lewin Foundation)
Tim Mundy

Pat Rafter
Belinda Seaton
Thank you also to all our donors who prefer to remain anonymous.

Trusts and Foundations

Aledal Foundation
Ballina RSL ClubGrants
Flannery Foundation
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
Future Generation Global (FGG)
Healthy North Coast

inGrained Foundation
James Frizelle Charitable Foundation
Masonicare - United Grand Lodge
Northern Rivers Community Foundation
NSW Government
Paskeville Foundation
Seaton Foundation
Spotlight Foundation
Uechtritz Family Foundation
Equity Trustees Charitable Foundation
- Patrick Rafter Cherish the Children

Corporate supporters



A word from our Ambassador

Mandy Nolan

We're not ok.

Everywhere I turn there are conversations about someone dealing with extreme mental health issues. Friends, family, young people, older people who are all struggling. People are reaching out looking for services that sometimes aren't available, are booked out, or aren't helping.

The system is broken and there is a human cost. Us. Our mental health. Our happiness. Our sense of the future. Our meaning and purpose has disappeared. While we log on to Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok our hearts have logged off.

Mental health conditions are increasing world wide. Here in Australia recent stats tell us 20% of Australians have had a mental health issue, with anxiety and depression being the most commonly reported. I've experienced it first hand. And solutions can be hard to come by, especially in a regional area with limited funding and resources. I've had to wait in line. Been sent home. Been told that people are booked out.

The system is overloaded and we need to do so much better. At the time of writing this, our region has the second highest suicide in rate in the State.

We survived the floods. But many are not in recovery, they are still in disaster mode. We are facing a summer of fires. We are doing it tough. And young people in our community are doing it toughest of all. Options for support for young people with mental health conditions in regional areas are limited. Some kids presenting with mental health issues are as young as 10 years old. Parents in our region are desperate for solutions.

”

Love, connection to community and nature and finding the path back to your purpose and meaning is the only way home.

Human Nature walks with our young people. They don't lead. They walk shoulder to shoulder. It's simple, and it's profound. And most importantly, it works.



How you can support us

Donate

At Human Nature, we're dedicated to providing innovative, nature-based mental health support to young people, giving them the tools they need to overcome challenges and thrive. But we can't do it alone. With no ongoing government funding, we rely on the generosity of donors like you to make our vital services a reality.

Your donation will provide young people with:

- Access to evidence-based mental health support, delivered by qualified professionals.
- Engaging and fun adventures in nature, fostering therapeutic connections.
- Safe and supportive environments where they can heal and grow.

Together, we can give young people the hope and support they need to build a brighter future. Donate today and make a real difference.

Please visit www.humannature.org.au/donate

Bequests

At Human Nature we are working to ensure no young person in the Northern Rivers gets left behind due to their challenging circumstances or experiences. You can make this exciting vision part of your legacy by leaving a gift in your will to Human Nature and ensuring the gift of a new beginning to our young people. We invest every gift carefully so that it has the greatest impact, enabling us to provide mental health services to the most disadvantaged young people in the Northern Rivers.

If you would like to know more about how a gift in your will can make a difference for young people please call Sarah Rainbird, Head of Philanthropy on 0477 176 312.

Philanthropic partnerships and funding opportunities

As true innovators, we are always looking for new ways to be more effective and efficient in our programs and service for your people suffering from mental ill health.

For a confidential discussion about how you can partner with us to directly fund our programs or sponsor a place for a young person contact Sarah Rainbird, Head of Philanthropy on sarah@humannature.org.au or 0477 176 312.

Corporate partnerships

Strategic partnerships with like-minded brands and businesses give us the opportunity to have a greater positive impact and help us meet our goal of being there for as many young people as possible.

So if you want to get behind an innovative approach to mental health, we would love to explore what a partnership between your business and Human Nature could look like. Our team will work with you to develop a relationship that will build on your networks, enhance your brand, engage your stakeholders and drive your goals.




To learn more contact Joy Barber Hua, Head of Marketing and Engagement on joy@humannature.org.au or 0459 866433.

Stay in touch

Visit humannature.org.au to subscribe our quarterly eNewsletter and stay updated about our work throughout the year.

When you donate to us you are automatically subscribed to our eNewsletter and to receive a digital copy our annual impact report. You are free to opt out at any time.

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-  [human-nature-adventure-therapy](https://www.linkedin.com/company/human-nature-adventure-therapy)





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ACNC Registered Charity

