

2024 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

HUMAN NATURE

HEALING THROUGH CONNECTION



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.



Human Nature Adventure Therapy welcomes, celebrates, appreciates and encourages diversity. We are committed to inclusion across race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, religion and ability.



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Introduction

Helping our young people thrive through crisis.

In the face of today's global challenges, there is still hope for positive change, especially in how we support the mental health of our young people.

The 'polycrisis' has hit young people particularly hard. The combined effects of climate change, economic instability, job insecurity, social inequality, digital overload and the lingering effects of the pandemic have created unique mental health vulnerabilities that previous generations haven't faced. Over the past two decades, this has led to a steady decline in youth mental health.

In Australia, the mental health system struggles to meet the needs of the 'missing middle'—individuals whose mental health needs fall between primary services and specialised care. Many of our young people fall through the cracks, and are left without timely or appropriate support, facing long waiting lists and high fees. This gap in care is concerning, as the wellbeing of emerging adults correlates directly to the overall wellbeing of society. Effective mental health support begins with raising community awareness and addressing social and economic factors.

At Human Nature our focus is on removing barriers to participation and building trust to foster engagement. Many of our young people have had negative experiences with conventional clinical settings, which often fail to make them feel safe or supported. True engagement occurs when youth have the opportunity to co-design their own support, as seen in initiatives like our Youth Leadership Council.

Our programs offer free, fast, accessible, and affordable entry points, along with mobile outreach. Our goal is to address immediate distress, build resilience, and equip young people with the psychosocial skills they need to navigate life's challenges. At Human Nature, we pride ourselves on listening to each and every one of our participants and value their feedback, because it helps us forever improve on our service, while better meeting their needs.

We are grateful to the donors and funders who understand the significance of addressing the youth mental health crisis and support our unique approach to care. We also thank the volunteers serving on our Board, Committees and Clinical Governance Advisory Council (CGAC) and our collaborative partners and organisations. We are inspired and driven by the dedication of the "Humans of Human Nature", our team on the ground who give their absolute all every day. Finally, we wish to thank the courageous young people who strive—regardless of their circumstances—to create meaningful and positive changes in their lives.

For the past decade, we have been refining a model to provide effective support to the young people who need it most. Committed to breaking destructive inter-generational cycles and driving real social change. We are focused on proving our approach works and are now ready to expand—so when the government fulfils its promise to transform the social sector, Human Nature will be prepared to help our most vulnerable young people rise above their challenges and thrive.



WE SUPPORT THE 'MISSING MIDDLE'

When young people come to us, 78% of them are assessed as needing moderate intensity support for challenges like mental health issues, childhood trauma, struggles with drugs or alcohol, behavioural difficulties, school refusal and social isolation.

This means they need support beyond what can be provided by most other online or clinic based services, but they do not qualify for more acute community mental health or inpatient care. Without Human Nature, many of them would fall into this 'missing middle,' where very few services are available to meet their needs.



Power in connection

Our achievements in 2023/24

There truly is power in connection and this is evident in the achievements of the 2023/24 financial year at Human Nature.

By working together, Human Nature:



SUPPORTED **126** YOUNG PEOPLE

in the Northern Rivers region, positively impacting not only their mental health but also their families, peers, teachers, and the wider community.



ACHIEVED A **95%** ENGAGEMENT RATE

with young people staying connected for 10 sessions or more – an industry-leading figure, especially for those facing significant challenges.



SAW **83%** IMPROVEMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH

of young people at exit. Proving that our service is creating impactful change in the lives of young people.

These significant achievements have encouraged us to dream about what is possible for the future.





LISTENED TO YOUNG PEOPLE

and integrated their feedback so that our activities and programs stay relevant to their needs.



IMPLEMENTED A CULTURAL SAFETY EVALUATION

to support our current and future Aboriginal young people, ensuring that our services are culturally competent.



PARTNERED WITH SOCIAL FUTURES AND THE FAMILY CENTRE

to deliver the Resilient Kids program, funded by Healthy North Coast through the Australian Government.



SECURED MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENTS

from key partners (including the James Frizelle Charitable Foundation, Future Generation Global, Ingrained Foundation and Seaton Foundation).



WELCOMED A DIVERSE GROUP OF NEW DONORS

who generously contributed funds, time, and expertise to make our work possible.



RAISED \$4.50 FOR EVERY \$1

that we spent on fundraising.



Our value proposition

Human Nature bridges the youth mental health service gap by offering a unique, evidence-based model that fosters long-term wellbeing. We do it by listening to young people, meeting them where they are and walking alongside them on their mental health journey for as long as possible.



Personalised Care

We remove barriers to participation and tailor our approach to each young person's needs and preferences.



Strong Relationships

We build trust and engagement through caring mentorship and wrap around support.



Mental Health Knowledge

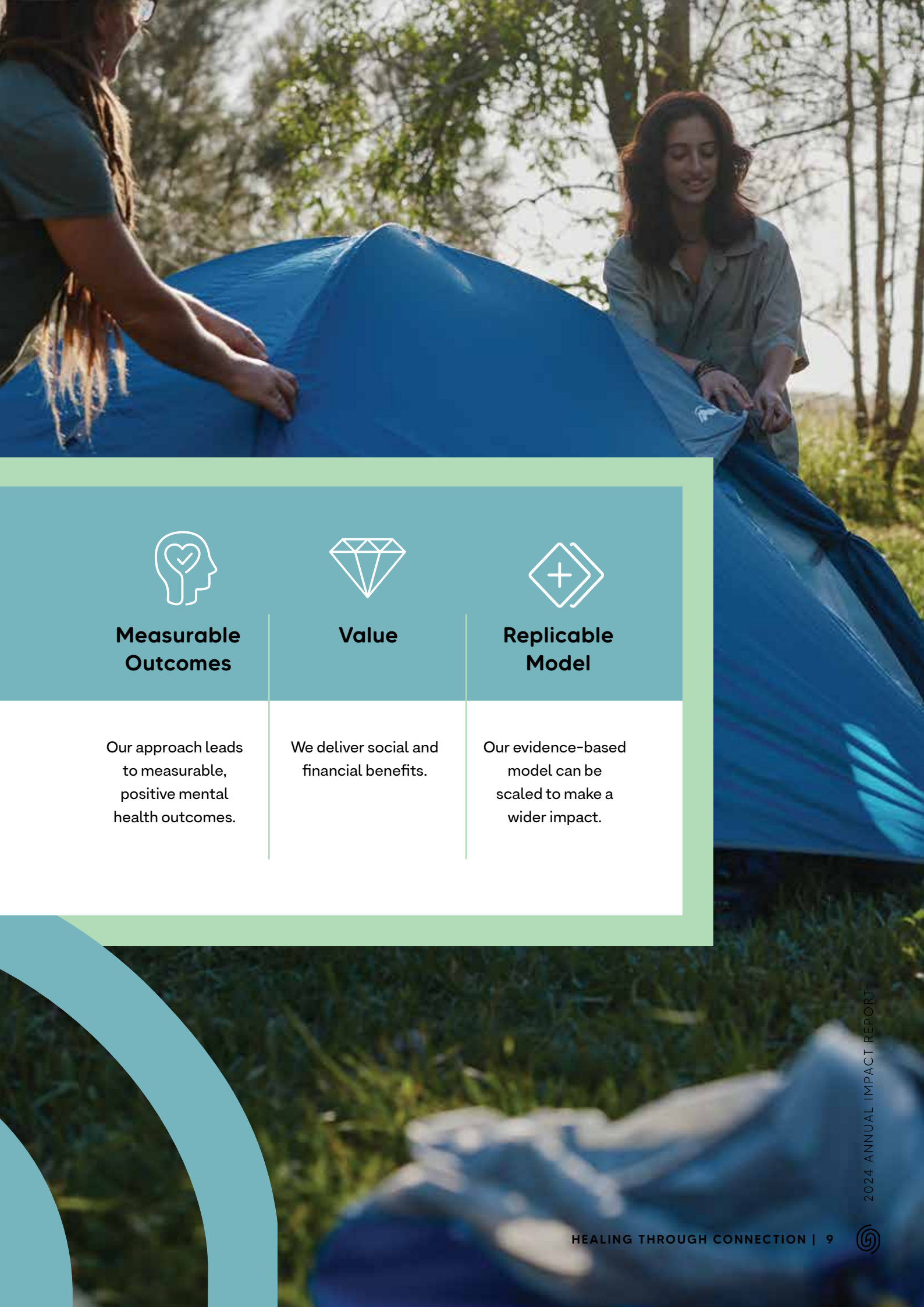
We empower young people with the tools to manage their mental health.



Nature-based Activities

We incorporate fun and challenging experiences in nature to promote holistic wellbeing.





Measurable Outcomes

Our approach leads to measurable, positive mental health outcomes.



Value

We deliver social and financial benefits.



Replicable Model

Our evidence-based model can be scaled to make a wider impact.



Chair and CEO's message

Together, we're changing lives

At Human Nature, the wellbeing of young people is at the heart of everything we do, and it takes an entire community to make this life-changing work possible.

At the core are the young people themselves – brave individuals embracing the challenge of creating meaningful and positive change in their lives. Their resilience and determination highlight the power of hope and the importance of our work. Surrounding them is a network of dedicated people, including those who serve on our Board, Committees, and Clinical Governance Advisory Council, as well as donors, funders and advocates who champion our mission. Together, this community recognises the critical need to address the youth mental health crisis and the unique value of Human Nature's model in tackling it.

Our evidence-based approach is effective in delivering positive outcomes for young people, but as the demand for support grows, our work must grow too. Our new strategic plan sets a bold vision: to expand our reach and ensure that more young people in more communities can access the care they need to overcome adversity and thrive. Yet, funding insecurity remains our greatest challenge. The demand for our services consistently exceeds the revenue available, particularly the flexible, unrestricted funding needed to invest in our highest-priority work and make the greatest impact.

As we approach our 10-year anniversary in 2025, we reflect on a decade of achievements and are inspired to dream bigger – to support more young people, in more places, and with even greater impact. Achieving this

vision depends on the continued generosity of our incredible community. Your support, through donations, partnerships, volunteering or advocacy, will be critical to shaping the next decade.

Together, we can transform even more lives and ensure that no young person is left without the support they need to thrive.



Sharyn White

Chief Executive Officer



Stephen Grant

Chair

CREATING LASTING CHANGE

“By supporting young people who have nowhere else to turn to, Human Nature fosters long term social and economic benefits. Improved mental health helps to reduce future reliance on the health system, while also contributing to increased engagement in education and employment. This leads to better long term life outcomes, including improved economic stability, housing, health and safety. These positive impacts ripple through the community, creating lasting change for both individuals and society.”

- Sharyn White **CEO**

Founder statement

Andy Hamilton



Over the past decade, Human Nature has been refining a model designed specifically for getting the right support to the right young people, at the right time. We're propelled not only by the joy of supporting the transformation of young lives, but also by an unwavering commitment to breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma and disadvantage and driving real social change. As I reflect on our journey striving for "a world where young people triumph over adversity and thrive", I am buoyed by our accomplishments, excited by our prospects, and encouraged by the recent changes in how Australia is responding to its most pressing social challenges.

Our Federal Government has made some strong strides in the right direction. They have committed to ending violence against women and children within the next ten years and recently launched a draft National Suicide Prevention Strategy that emphasises addressing root causes of distress before crisis occurs. These two national priorities are deeply interconnected: adverse life circumstances, including exposure to domestic and sexual violence significantly increase the risk of both suicidal distress and future cycles of harm.

To achieve these worthy goals, Australia needs innovative approaches that effectively support young people most at risk – those navigating trauma, intergenerational disadvantage, and disconnection. For many, existing services fail to meet their unique needs or engage them in the help they need. However, when identified early, engaged effectively, and supported in the right way, these young people can rewrite their futures – breaking free from cycles of harm and instead thriving as valued members of our communities.

We're committed to continually improving our programs, whilst amplifying and evidencing the effectiveness of our approach. At the same time, we're laying the groundwork to expand our impact, helping shift the focus of the social sector to early intervention and prevention. This approach aims to break cycles of family violence, addiction, crime, mental health struggles, and unemployment—creating brighter, more hopeful futures for our most vulnerable young people.

Andy Hamilton

Founder



The year at a glance

Key statistics from the 2023-2024 financial year.

126 YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED
by Human Nature

60 NEW PARTICIPANTS
(at intake all clients are aged between 14-18)

1760 INDIVIDUAL appointments

9 MONTHS
the average duration of care

22 GROUP ACTIVITIES
such as whale watching,
horse riding and Ebike
adventures

3 MULTI-DAY CAMPS
with young people

Who we provided support to

97% of participants receiving 1:1 support were aged 14-18

82% of clients disclosed being victims of sexual and/or physical violence

76% of clients disclosed living with Family and Domestic Violence

26% of participants identify as Aboriginal

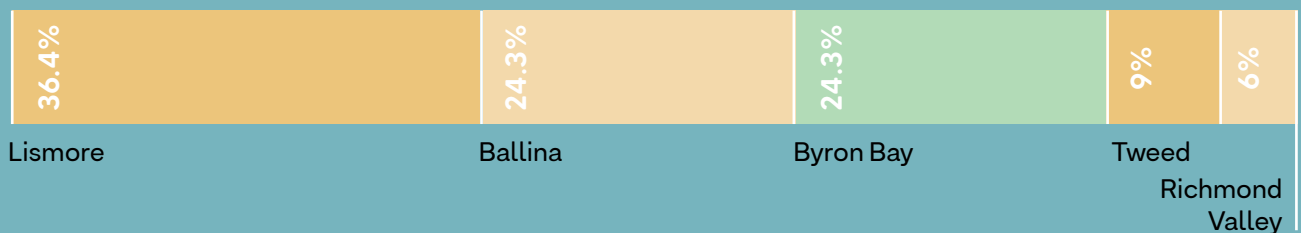


Our Elev8 program offers group activities with peers. Of this group:



The older participants play an important role providing mentoring to younger participants and contributing to youth leadership.

Participants came from across the Northern Rivers LGA's:



The outcomes we achieved

97% of young people report they are making progress in at least one key outcome area.

91% of young people report they are making progress in at least two key outcome areas.

81% of young people report they are making progress in at least three key outcome areas.

95% of clients engage for more than 10 sessions

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WERE REFERRED TO US

75% of referrals come from government sources including schools and the Department of Communities and Justice but generally do not bring any funding with them.



Our impact

At Human Nature, we are committed to transforming the lives of young people by making mental health care more accessible and removing barriers to getting help.

Our programs are designed to do more than treat immediate mental distress. The goal of Human Nature is to have a lasting impact on the mental health and wellbeing of every young person we work with. By addressing risk factors through tailored therapies and building resilience, we equip young people with the tools they need to navigate a range of life challenges.

Our strategic approach

Human Nature understands that the therapeutic relationship between a therapist and a young person is key to the engagement and effectiveness of the therapy. Therefore, our model combines clinically proven, evidence-based psychological therapies with fun and engaging activities conducted in nature.

We prioritise building strong therapeutic alliances and carefully curating the deep therapeutic work required for each individual to create positive change.

The multidisciplinary team at Human Nature consists of qualified mental health professionals and highly skilled youth workers who employ a flexible, individualised approach that is not limited by the confines of the clinic. We work at the pace of trust, so young people can engage at the intensity they need, for as long as is clinically necessary.





SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

young people:

- can identify mental wellbeing (mental health literacy)
- have a toolkit of coping strategies to manage their mental health
- have increased confidence and self-efficacy

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

young people:

- engage in self-care and healthy routines to address mental wellbeing
- have decreased distress (depression, anxiety, stress) and suicide ideation
- have improved wellbeing

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

young people:

- actively maintain their own wellbeing and seek help to improve their mental health when needed
- have improved wellbeing, social connection and sense of belonging



Measuring our impact

Our impact measurement tools were selected because they help us better understand the impact of our work as an organisation, whilst ensuring young people are meaningfully involved in their care and engaged in improving our services.

My Mind Star™



We use My Mind Star to measure the impact of our support on the young people we work with. Outcomes Stars are widely used evidence-based tools that both support and measure change.

This version of the Outcomes Star is for young people who are experiencing poor mental health and provides a visual representation of a client's journey using language developed by young people with lived experience of mental health challenges. Clients complete a Mind Star collaboratively with their therapist or mentor.

Using a 5 point scale, My Mind Star assesses seven key protective factors for fostering mental, emotional, and behavioural health in adolescents.

1. Feelings and emotions – dealing with feelings, recognising unhelpful thinking, ways to feel better, managing mental health

2. Healthy lifestyle – nutrition, sleep, physical activity, managing physical health conditions, engaging with healthcare providers

3. Where you live – stability at home, safety, positive routine, meeting basic needs and managing housing responsibilities

4. Friends and relationships – support from friends, partners, peers, family or other adults, bullying, knowing who to trust

5. School, training and work – maximising potential from school, training and work

6. How you use your time – enjoying activities, fun and relaxation, avoiding risky activities

7. Self-esteem – embracing self-acceptance, recognition of strengths, building confidence, and fostering a sense of belonging

The My Mind Star journey is all about growth, moving toward stability and confidence at each young person's own pace. Some may feel stuck at first, uncertain that change is even possible, while others are ready to start talking and exploring their experiences. As they engage, many find new ways to handle challenges, whether it's by opening up to others, trying relaxation techniques, or building healthy routines that support their wellbeing.

Along the way, they discover what truly works for them, learning to handle setbacks and growing in self-confidence. In the final stage, managing well, they feel ready to navigate life's ups and downs, with optimism and the resilience to seek extra support when they need it. My Mind Star offers a clear, empowering path, helping each young person see just how far they've come and the strengths they've built along the way.



Clients often say

“Can we do that Star thing again? Things have changed for me!”

Our clients love using the Star - it's more than just a measuring tool. It sparks great conversations, helps set meaningful goals, and lets young people see just how far they've come. When they ask to use it again, we know they're feeling empowered to track and celebrate their progress.

Young people's My Mind Stars when they join Human Nature

When young people first join us, they're often struggling in multiple areas of their lives:

- Every single young person is finding at least one aspect of life really tough
- Almost all are wrestling with challenges in two different areas
- Most (93%) are having a hard time in three or more areas of their lives

But the good news is, our data shows that young people who work with our team make real progress. In 2023-2024, 97% improved in at least one key area and over 81% saw positive changes in three or more areas. On average, each participant made progress in over four different areas, with major improvements in feelings, emotions, and school or work. It's inspiring to see them gaining confidence, building resilience and taking positive steps forward in their lives.





Feedback Informed Therapy

In addition to tracking progress using My Mind Star, we also use Feedback Informed Therapy which involves the client completing an Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) and a Session Rating Scale (SRS) at every session.

The **ORS** assesses areas of life-functioning known to fluctuate as a result of therapeutic intervention.

The **SRS** assesses how the client feels about the relationship, goals and topics, approach to treatment, and an overall rating.

Human Nature uses MyOutcomes® software to record ORS and SRS results, allowing for helpful and insightful comparison with data from other assessments (almost three-quarters of a million other administrations).

Session Rating Scales (SRS) are used routinely, every client, every session, to facilitate collaborative, person-centred and feedback-informed support, generating a culture of active feedback between the client and the practitioner. In other words, our young people tell us whether or not the support is working for them, each and every session.



The impact of our work is best seen through the lives of the young people we support.



Ruby finished Year 12 and is studying Diploma of Child Care, after losing her home in floods and struggling with anxiety.

Anna moved out of foster care and into uni accommodation as she's studying law.



Zac recently turned 18 and says he's feeling 'mostly happy for the first time' after being addicted to cannabis and feeling depressed and suicidal since he was 12.

Cait is doing Year 11 at TAFE and has her art in an exhibition having overcome anxiety and self harming.



Max completed a 3 month AOD residential rehab program and has engaged in relapse prevention support.

Josh is surfing (after learning how to at a Human Nature surf camp) and is working in landscaping. This is the longest he has gone without smoking cannabis in 4 years.



Eli has not re-offended for several months and is playing footy.

Disclaimer: Images are posed by models.



Our 2023/24 impact data

Our participants are complex

The average entry ORS score is 21.9. A person is considered clinically 'at risk' with a score below 25.

Our participants make reliable clinical change

The average overall change between intake ORS and most recent ORS is 7.6, with a score of 6 or over indicating reliable clinical change.

My Mind Star results

By analysing results from these two tools we can demonstrate the following improvements:

Feelings and emotions



Healthy lifestyle



Where you live



Friends & relationships



School, training & work



How you use your time



Self-esteem





97%

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



91%

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



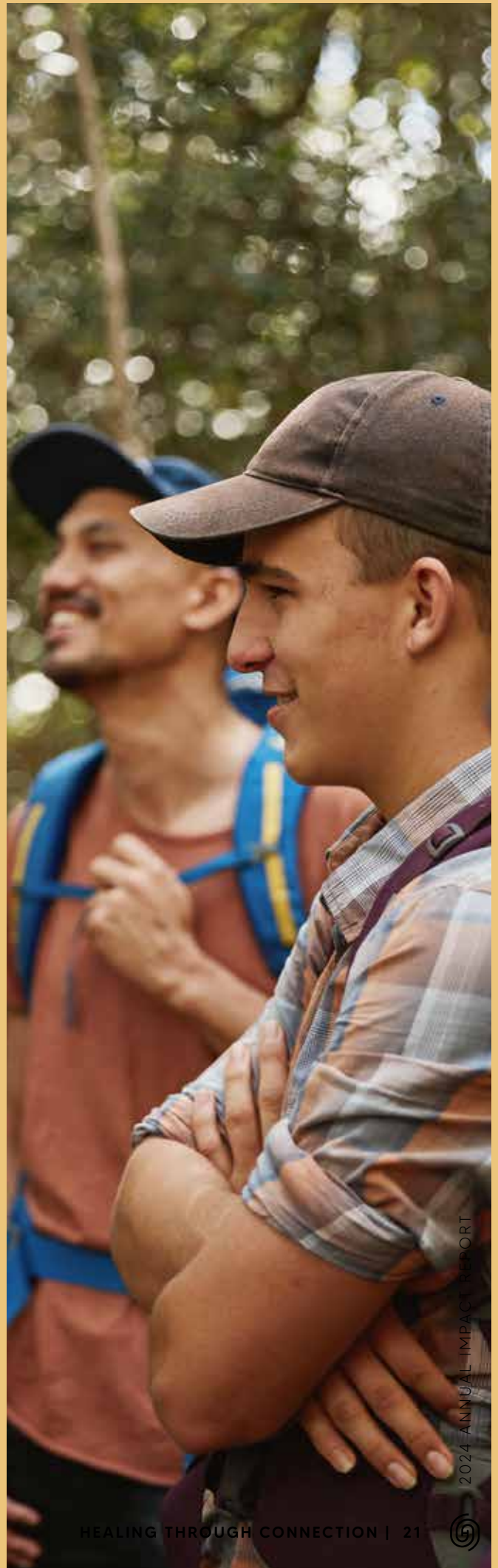
81%

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



4.3

Average number of outcome areas in which someone is making progress



Client improvement on ORS/SRS

The collated results for all clients during 2023-2024 show that most young people receiving support from Human Nature showed significant improvements in their mental health and wellbeing:

68% INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

54% INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

84% SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

69% OVERALL WELLBEING

When they first come to us, many of our clients are facing serious challenges, with an average mental health score of 21.9 (a score of 25 or below is considered 'clinically at risk'). After working with us, their average improvement is 7.6 points, showing real and meaningful progress.

Our approach is not only effective but exceeds standard therapy benchmarks, with an effect size (client progress compared to no treatment controls) of .86 (higher than the usual .80), demonstrating the strong impact of our nature-based support. Additionally, 72% of young people have achieved their personal goals as indicated by their most recent ORS score.



“ I like that at Human Nature they're out in nature and actually listen. ”



Clara's* story



In September 2023 we received a referral from the welfare staff at the local high school for a young woman, Clara. She was 16 years old and had experienced intermittent homelessness since the age of 13. She had a challenging relationship with her mum, and her dad had recently been released from jail. The school had notified Child Protection Services regarding Clara's self-harming behaviours, suicide attempts and homelessness. Clara was drinking alcohol, smoking cannabis daily and vaping.

At the time of the referral, Clara was experiencing severe anxiety and having trouble sleeping. She was attending school, but with increasing periods of non-attendance.

The welfare team had attempted to refer Clara to various services, but she struggled to cope with meeting professionals in an office setting. She said that she did not want to see a counsellor at all, but had agreed to a Human Nature referral as she liked the idea of being able to see a counsellor outdoors.

Clara met with her Human Nature therapist weekly, and hardly missed any appointments. What she enjoyed most in her session was to go for a drive to the beach. On the drive, Clara felt comfortable to talk about her childhood experiences and current challenges. Her therapist used narrative therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy strategies to help her make sense of and integrate her experiences.

*Name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

When they arrived at the beach, Clara happily walked along the shoreline as her therapist encouraged her to notice and describe the sensations she was experiencing: the sand between her toes, wind on her face, sounds near and far and together they imagined what was over the horizon. They would share some snacks and discuss food choices and favourite meals. On the drive back, Clara created a playlist on the car stereo, shared her favourite songs and talked about how they made her feel.

Clara's therapist made a warm, supportive referral to youth housing which resulted in her getting into transitional housing. Now that her living situation is more stable, Clara has been attending school more regularly and she has agreed to a referral to a Specialist Victims of Crime counsellor as she says she is now able to cope with "sitting in a room talking about all this stuff".

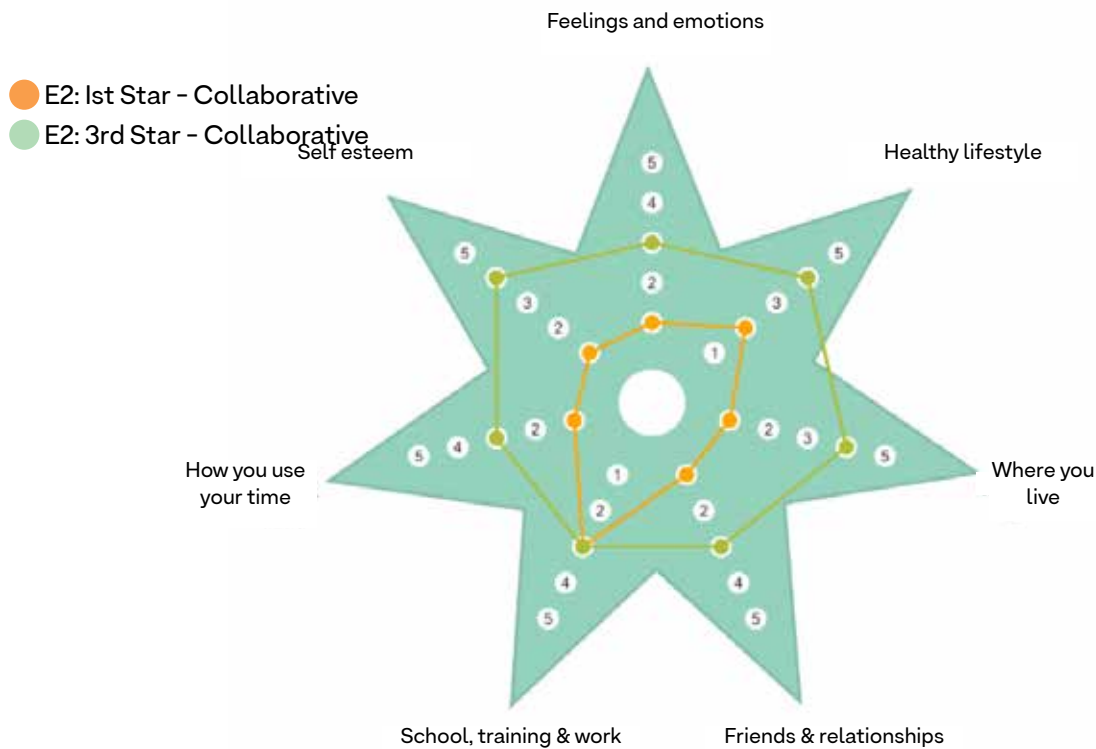
“ Whilst going through some extremely difficult days, I am able to use techniques I learned from Human nature. This draws on good memories to feel loved and enough, and reassures me to be gentler with myself. ”



Clara's progress as seen through My Mind Star

Clara's My Mind Stars show that when she was first referred to Human Nature, she felt stuck—overwhelmed by her emotions, struggling with low self-esteem and feeling disconnected from friends and relationships. She also faced challenges in how she spent her time, where she lived, and in making healthy lifestyle choices.

Six months and around 20 sessions later, things look very different. With the right support, Clara is discovering what works for her. She's gaining confidence, building stronger relationships, and taking positive steps in all areas of her life. This transformation is a testament to the power of the individualised support we provide at Human Nature.

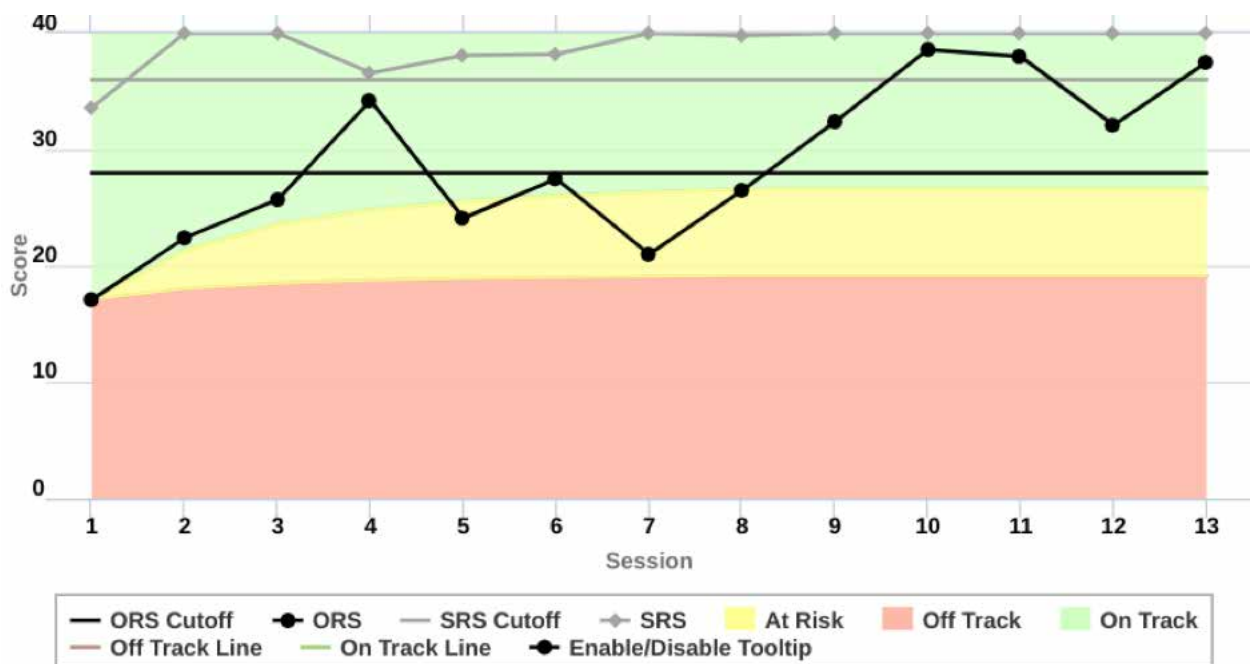


Clara's journey seen through MyOutcomes

Clara's journey with Human Nature, as seen through her MyOutcomes chart, highlights the positive impact of our approach. When Clara first came to us, she was clinically at risk and unsure about the support she was receiving. But over time, we saw a steady shift. Her wellbeing scores moved from "off track" to "on track," showing clear progress, even with some ups and downs along the way,

something that's completely normal in this process.

Her feedback on the sessions also tells a powerful story. Clara consistently rated her time with us highly, feeling understood, supported and confident that we were working on the right things together. This strong therapeutic relationship was key to her growth.



“I’ve noticed my stress tolerance has increased in the last two weeks. I am able to name my stress or discomfort and allow it to be until I find/create an appropriate space to unpack it. Feels good. I’m tired, but I have resilience.”



The strategic outcomes we are achieving for young people

Through the support of our partnership with Future Generation Global (FGG), we refined our theory of change and developed an impact framework which includes short, medium and long term outcomes which we now use to measure our impact. We are now in our second year of this new approach to data collection and are seeing impressive results.

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

Positive changes in knowledge and attitudes

The majority of young people engaged with Human Nature showed significant improvements in their understanding of mental health, self-confidence, and coping strategies. Many reported feeling more empowered to use their time in ways that promote personal growth and resilience, reducing risks and enhancing their overall wellbeing.

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Positive changes in actions, behaviour and wellbeing

Our personalised approach provides sustained, intensive support, with young people typically involved in Human Nature's services for 9 to 12 months. This continuity allows us to see both short and medium-term outcomes taking shape together.

The majority of young people involved with Human Nature in 2023 improved their self-care and wellbeing, including positive changes in lifestyle, relationships and school, training and work. Almost half experienced positive changes to their living circumstances.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Sustained positive changes in actions, behaviour and wellbeing

We began collecting long-term data in 2023 and are already seeing promising trends. Of those who completed our survey after exiting our services, 80% reported having high or moderate levels of wellbeing. Almost all expressed a strong understanding of their mental health, with three-quarters actively maintaining their wellbeing and 39% seeking help when needed. These insights establish a powerful benchmark for how we track long-term success moving forward.

“They’re doing a good thing, and should keep doing it. It’s improving this world. The world’s doomed if they had a bunch of angry kids like the way I used to be running around. It screws society more than it already is, having kids repeating the cycle over and over again.”



Working with Aboriginal young people

“ Human Nature has helped me to where I’m independent enough on my own, but also work has taken over my life so I try to find stuff to de-stress myself. ”

Of the young people we support, 26% identify as Aboriginal. Recognising the importance of cultural safety, we conducted an evaluation led by a local Aboriginal consultant to better understand how we can improve our services for Aboriginal clients.

Using the culturally appropriate method of ‘yarning’, the evaluation gathered feedback from current and past clients. While the findings show a strong connection between our service and Aboriginal youth—98% described us as “young person friendly”—it also highlighted areas for improvement, such as employing more Aboriginal staff and deepening ties with Traditional Owners.

We’re committed to making these changes to ensure every Aboriginal young person feels truly supported, understood and connected.



Our people and governance

Inspired leadership

Our board

Over the past year, the Board has experienced significant renewal. While we reluctantly farewelled Kathleen Cator and Lea Clothier, who both made meaningful contributions during their time with us, we embraced the opportunity to revitalise the Board. It was our great pleasure to welcome three exceptional candidates: Joe Boyd (Treasurer), Jane Sheehy, and Melea Hibbins.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our Board members for donating so much of their valuable time, expertise, and dedication in providing strategic direction and governance to Human Nature.

Stephen Grant FCA (UK Chartered Accountant), Grad Dip (Marketing and Communications), **Board Chair**

John Akehurst (B. Eng. Sc), **Deputy Chair**

Joe Boyd (B. Comm, CIMA, CPA), **Treasurer**

Hugo Hayes (B. Audio [Studio Production], B. Psych (Hon), MPsyh (Clin) (current)

Melea Hibbins (BA [Sociology & Politics], B.Laws, Grad. Dip. Laws, M. Public Administration (current)

Jane Sheehy (BIT, M.Bus, AICD)

To Kathleen and Lea, your contributions have left a lasting impact, and we sincerely thank you for your service.

Our senior leadership team



Sharyn White
CEO



Andy Hamilton
Founder



Jen Parke
Head of Operations



Joy Barber Hua
Head of Marketing and Engagement



Sarah Rainbird
Head of Philanthropy



Human Nature's commitment to excellence

Our Clinical Governance Advisory Council

At Human Nature, we're committed to delivering exceptional mental health care for young people. Key to this is our Clinical Governance Advisory Council (CGAC), a group of expert professionals who provide vital oversight to ensure our programs are safe, effective, and impactful.

Led by Chair Vicki Rose, the CGAC works closely with our Board and management to enhance the quality and reach of our services. They guide therapeutic strategies, monitor outcomes, and conduct annual clinical audits, ensuring we meet the diverse needs of the young people we support. With a multidisciplinary team that includes clinicians, community leaders, and researchers, the CGAC brings together a wealth of expertise to help us continually improve.

This council is a cornerstone of our strong governance framework, driving the integrity and excellence of our work and ensuring we deliver transformative support to those who need it most.

Current Council members

Vicki Rose BA, B. Soc. Admin, MBA, (Chair)

Andy Hamilton BA, B.Psych (Hon)

Dr Will Dobud MSW, PHD Phil/SW

Dr Richard Lakeman Dip. Nursing, B.Nursing/BA (Hon) PHD Nursing Science, M. Psychotherapy

Samantha James B.Psych (Hon), M.Psych(Clin)

Sharni Roberts BSocSc

Linda DeMilford BSW, Grad.Dip (Childhood & Youth Studies)

Tom Mulvaney B.OutdoorEd, BBehSc (Psychology), Dip.VET, BPsych(Hons), M.ClinPsych

We would also like to thank Carlie Atkinson and Kathleen Cator who retired from the CGAC in 2023.

“ I get to do lots of activities like hands-on stuff and we get out and about, in the bush and beach. It keeps me busy and they gain your trust so you can start to speak to them. ”



Where challenge meets change

Co-designing a service for young people with young people

At Human Nature, we believe that the young people we serve are the true experts in their own lives. That's why, in 2020, we took a bold step to reshape our services in direct response to their voices when they told us that what they most needed was lasting, meaningful support.

By listening deeply to their experiences and needs, we sought to bridge the gap in mental health care for those often falling through the cracks — the “missing middle.” This collaborative approach allowed us to evolve our programs beyond the 10 day therapeutic expedition model that our Founder, Andy Hamilton, had delivered since 2015.

152 of our former clients from the previous six years were surveyed to gain deeper insight into their experience at Human Nature. 56% responded and their feedback played a critical role in shaping how Human Nature evolved and adapted to meet the needs of the young people we continue to work with.

They told us that while the 10-day expedition was impactful, what they really needed was ongoing support. They valued the outdoor, skill-building activities and the deep therapeutic relationships, but wanted more opportunities to stay connected with Human Nature and peers with similar experiences. Group adventures, recreational activities and programs that build life skills and employment capacity were high on their list.

So, we listened—and we made it happen.

We redesigned our services, and now every young person referred to us enters directly into the Activ8 program, offering one-on-one therapy or mentoring tailored to their needs and held outdoors in nature to create a relaxed, pressure-free environment.

Therapeutic camps are designed and delivered in consultation with young people, and we have built our in-house capacity to deliver flexible offerings that can be adapted to suit the changing needs of participants, as well as increasingly challenging climatic conditions.

When they are ready, participants transition to our Elev8 program, where they join group events and activities. Elev8 offers a space for young people to develop social and emotional skills, participate in outdoor adventures and connect with peers with similar lived experience. Through camps, workshops and leadership opportunities, Elev8 fosters a sense of belonging and continued growth.

We also invite participants to join our Youth Leadership Program, where they can continue to shape our services with their input and ideas, ensuring the young people we serve continue to be at the heart of everything we do.



All the ways young people are involved in what we do

Using tools like My Mind Star, young people choose the areas of their lives they want to focus on, ensuring the support they receive is truly relevant to their needs. Through the Session Rating Scale (SRS) and Outcome Rating Scale (ORS), they provide ongoing feedback about how effective our sessions are in addressing their goals, helping us stay aligned with what matters most to them.

Beyond individual sessions, we regularly collect feedback through client and parent surveys and feedback surveys after every group event or therapeutic camp, so we can continue to refine and improve our offerings. Our approach to co-design is another way we empower young people, allowing them to help shape the activities and events we provide and even aspects of our service delivery.

We also invite young people to participate in interviews for new therapeutic staff, ensuring we find the right people who can truly connect with and support them in meaningful ways. Their voices are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring we continue to provide care that is compassionate, effective and youth-driven.



Our new strategic priorities

2024-2029

From humble beginnings, Human Nature has grown into a remarkable youth mental health service with a unique model of care and strong evidence that our approach works. It is evident that there are young people across the country who are missing out on the support they need to overcome adversity, and the growing youth mental health crisis indicates that this number is only going to grow.

So, in early 2024, the Board and Senior Leadership Team came together to reflect, analyse, listen and envision the future they wanted for Human Nature. They focused on the role it should play in assisting more of our youth to overcome adversity and thrive in the years to follow.

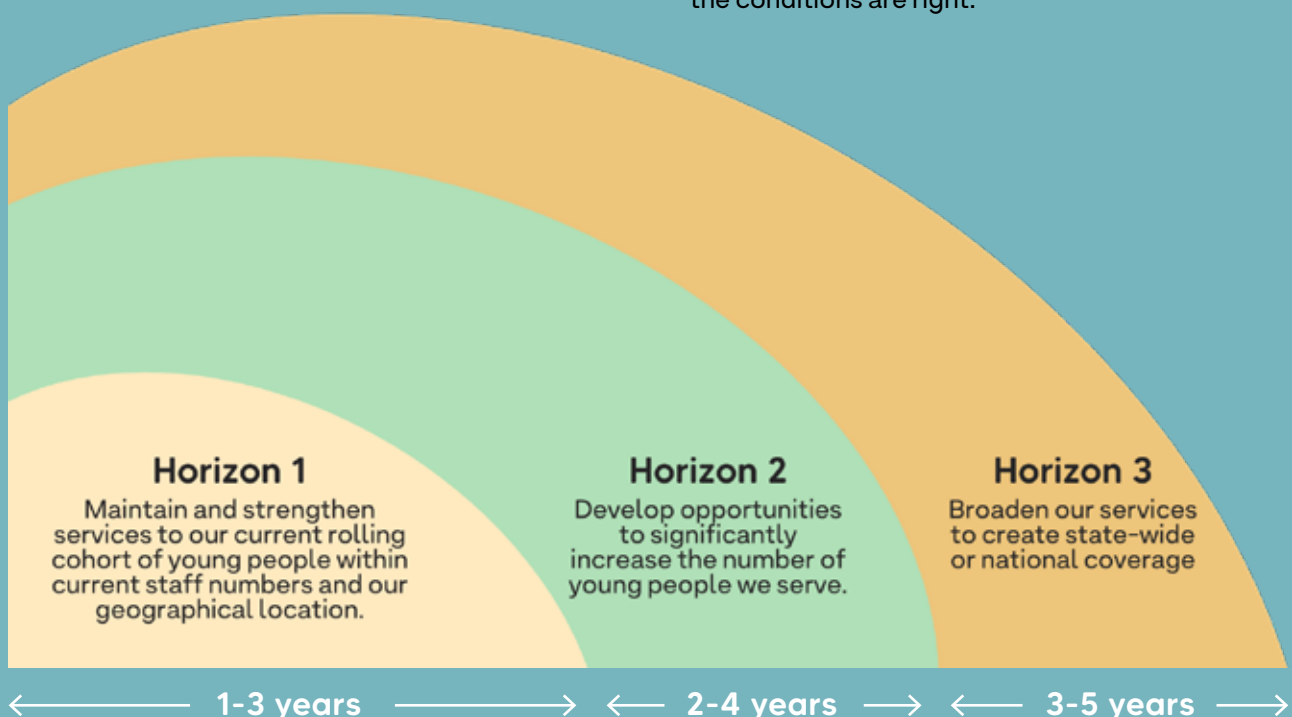
The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan outlines a clear vision for growth, allowing Human Nature to support more

young people across a wider range of locations. The plan ensures that we continue to strengthen our foundations as we charter three horizons for expansion, taking a thoughtful and responsible approach to replication. This strategy allows us to extend our impact sustainably, reaching more youth without compromise of support quality.

A vision for growth

At Human Nature, we are on a mission to create a significantly brighter future for more young people. By scaling our proven Human Nature model, we can unlock its potential, instigating lasting and positive change in more communities.

We will invest in growth, guided by a clear strategy that will see us further strengthen our existing business, while preparing to scale at pace when the conditions are right.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The Board and Senior Team would like to give our heartfelt thanks to Rachel Akehurst, who provided pro bono support for our strategic planning process.



Strategic priority areas

“ I could not credit your service enough for what it’s done for me. I was diagnosed with Tourette’s and I would not have survived, had I not known what I was taught from Human Nature. ”

Programs

Objective

Solidify our reputation as youth mental health engagement experts in the Northern Rivers region.

Strategy

We are committed to reaching the maximum number of young people each year (within funding limitations) and will continuously strengthen and evolve our programs to maximise our reach, achieve measurable positive outcomes and ensure financial sustainability. We will prioritise consistent and high quality delivery across all core programs.

People and culture

Objective

To be a ‘listening’ organisation that is inclusive and fosters a positive relationship with its people: participants, staff and supporters.

Strategy

To create a safe, inclusive environment that prioritises staff and young people’s wellbeing, development and feedback, attracting and retaining exceptional talent while delivering excellent service.

Sustainability and growth

Objective

Attract funding and investment from partners who seek a positive impact for vulnerable youth.

Strategy

To attract impactful funding by demonstrating strong outcomes, increasing visibility, and building partnerships with donors, government and the mental health sector, while showcasing the replicability of our model for vulnerable youth.

Governance

Objective

Sustain an environment of trust, transparency and accountability.

Strategy

To sustain trust through national accreditation, continuous program improvement, risk management, climate awareness, and active input from First Nations participants, staff, and stakeholders.



Our supporters

We can't do it alone

The work our therapists do simply wouldn't be possible without the generosity and commitment of our community - it is the support of donors, grantors and in-kind partners that makes our impact possible. Thank you.

Our fundraising successes

Over the past year, we've seen incredible support through our fundraising initiatives. Events like International Women's Day, Take a Hike and the Mick Fanning Golf Day have brought our community together, raising crucial funds for our programs. We were also the recipients of our first international grant and continue to grow our multi-year partnerships.

The dedication of our supporters has been instrumental in continuing our nature-based, trauma-informed services for young people.



Mick Fanning Charity Golf Day

This year, we were honoured to be one of the three beneficiaries of the, now infamous, Mick Fanning Charity Golf Day, which raised an incredible \$674,000 for flood relief efforts in the Northern Rivers. Held on 14 June 2024, this marks the third annual event since the devastating 2022 floods that affected large parts of northern NSW and southeast Queensland.

Mick Fanning, known for his surfing legacy, has deep ties to the Northern Rivers and has remained committed to helping the region recover. His golf day, featuring celebrities like Pat Rafter, Ash Barty, Leila McKinnon, Dillon Alcott, Bernard Fanning, Owen Wright and Guy Sebastian, drew widespread support and has raised over \$1 million since its inception.

The funds raised from this year's event were shared between Human Nature Adventure Therapy, Hands & Hearts and Givit. These much-needed contributions will help us continue delivering trauma-informed mental health services to vulnerable young people still grappling with the long-term impact of cumulative traumas, floods, bushfires and the global pandemic.

The day also included exciting opportunities for the public to participate, from raffles to an online auction featuring prizes like a Daniel Ricciardo F1 racing suit and exclusive surf memorabilia from Mick himself.

We are incredibly grateful for this generous donation from Mick and the team, which will allow us to continue to be there for young people as they navigate the challenges of trauma and recovery. Follow @mickfanning_charitygolfdays on Instagram for updates on next year's event!

Strong Partnerships

We're proud to partner with organisations that share our vision of transforming youth mental health. These partnerships are essential to ensuring that we can reach more young people and families in need.



Delivered in collaboration with Social Futures, the Resilient Kids program is funded by Healthy North Coast through a grant provided by the Australian Government.

Human Nature is a proud member of the consortia that is delivering the Resilient Kids program, supporting young people to recover from flood trauma and build resilience. Working in conjunction with our consortium partners, Social Futures and The Family Centre, the program will run across the 2024 and 2025 financial years.

Under this program, Human Nature has been engaged to deliver specialist counselling support to 38 flood impacted young people who have been unable to engage with other available support. Delivery commenced in FY 2024 and will be completed in FY 2025.

We also received a grant from the Youth Participation Fund component of the program to offer Empowered Future Camps which will facilitate social connection, community resilience and build youth leadership, particularly in relation to disaster recovery. These camps will be delivered in FY 2025.



Empowering change, together

We're deeply grateful for the kindness and generosity of our donors, grantors and in-kind supporters including:

Individual supporters (\$1000+)

John Akhurst
Kathy and Richard Carter
Mick Fanning
David Gyngell & Leila McKinnon
Lisa Joel
Kathleen Cator
Tim Mundy
Jane Mundy
M E Pennefather
Liz & Danny Rogers
Radek & Helen Sali
Belinda Seaton
Josephine Wolanski
Elizabeth Woods

Thank you also to all our broader community of donors who make regular contributions to Human Nature and who prefer to remain anonymous.

Trusts and Foundations

Aledal Foundation
Born This Way Foundation
Brinsmead Hill Family Foundation
Ereshkigal Foundation
Flannery Foundation
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
George Lewin Foundation

Ingrained Foundation
James Frizelle Charitable Foundation
Northern Rivers Community Foundation
Paskeville Foundation
Seaton Foundation
Social Futures
The L & R Uechtritz Foundation

Corporate and community supporters

Social Futures
Future Generation Global
Healthy North Coast
A1 Services
Country Women's Association Ballina
Northern Rivers Suicide Awareness and Prevention Group
Climbing Anchors

In-kind supporters

Five V Capital - Sea to Summit
Rowie
Wanderlust
First National Byron
Our Byron Community Podcast
The SunSeeker

Ambassador

Mandy Nolan



Become a donor

Take a Hike fundraisers

Frank Coughlan

Nikki Beaumont

Karen Thornton

Kathleen Cator

Renee Allen

Danni Carr

Zenith Virago

Mandy Nolan

Thanks to your unwavering support, we're able to continue providing innovative mental health services that make a real difference in the lives of young people. Together, Human Nature is creating a brighter future—one where no young person is left behind.

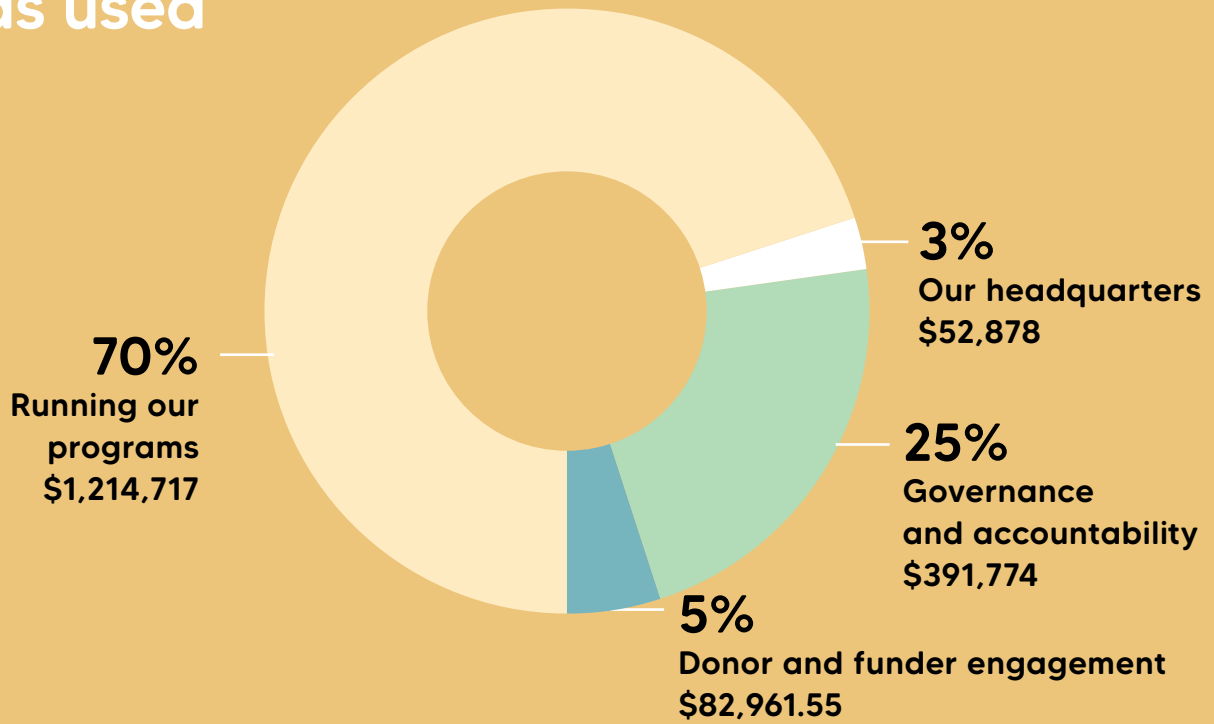
Human Nature believes every young person in the Northern Rivers region, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the support they need to overcome their challenges and thrive. That's why we ensure our innovative, nature-based mental health programs remain free and accessible to those who need them most.

When you support Human Nature, you're not just helping young people today—you are investing in the mental health and wellbeing of the next future generation of young people in the Northern Rivers community.

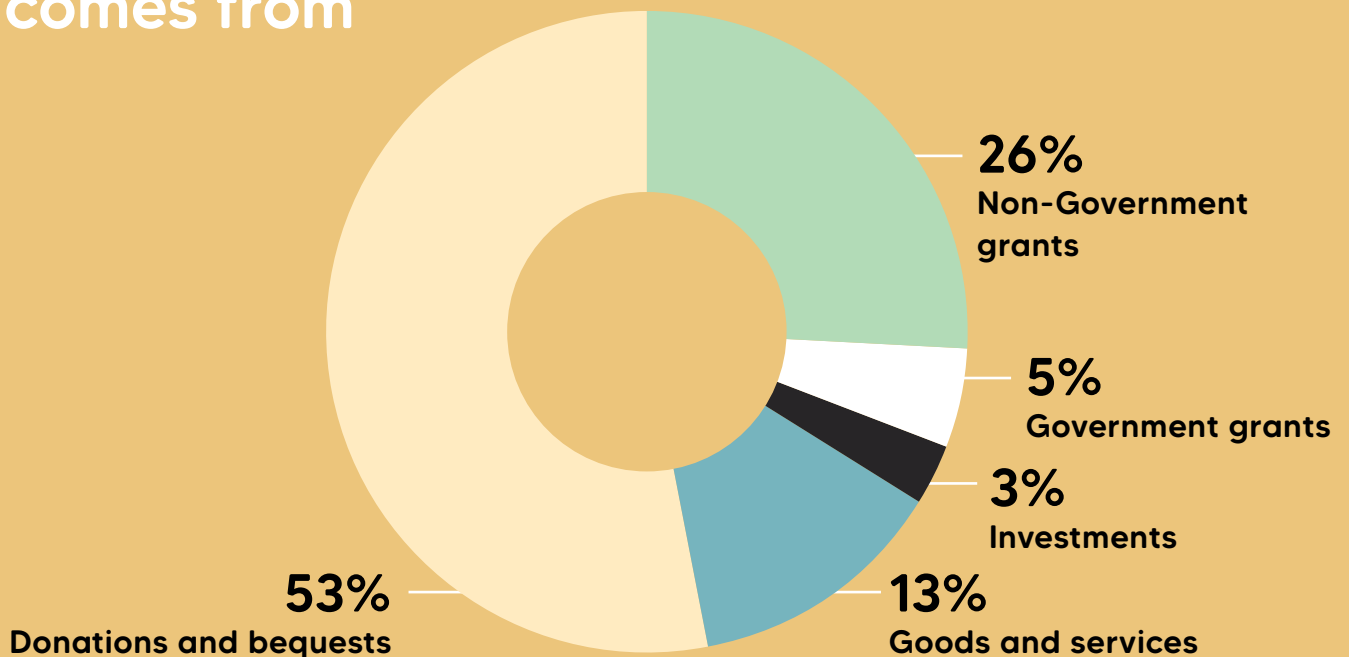


Financials

Where our money was used



Where the money comes from



- 20% reduction in government grants as a result of the conclusion of one-off flood and COVID grants
- 15% increase in non-government grants
- 11% increase in earned revenue largely related to the purchase of therapy sessions by other organisations
- Revenue from donations was stable

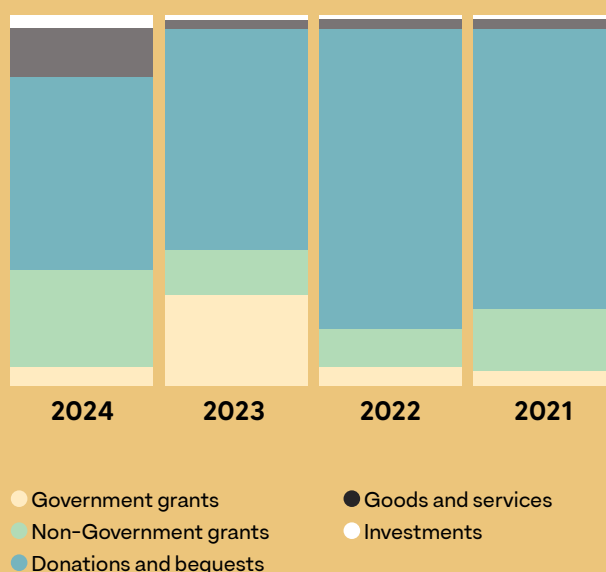
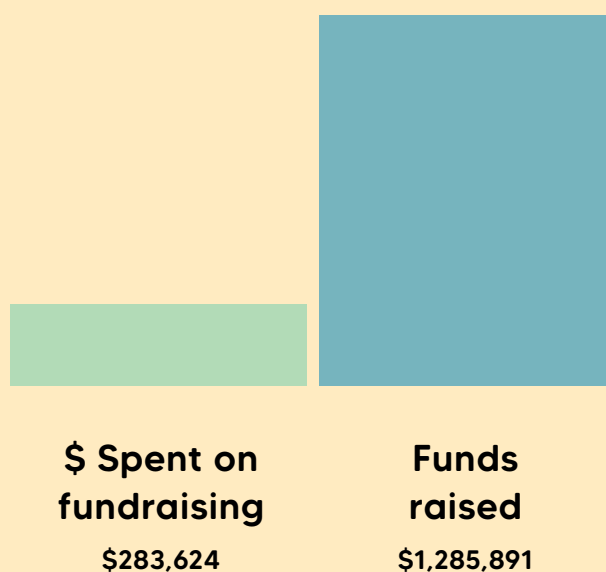
Income diversification

We are making progress in diversifying our income to ensure greater revenue sustainability.

We have successfully diversified our revenue by steadily growing revenue streams from the sale of goods and services- primarily selling places in our programs to other businesses. We have also successfully grown our proportion of non government grants. Whilst this is tied income, it has the benefit of giving us a pipeline of confirmed revenue to augment donations

Unfortunately, Government grants remain elusive. We have been strengthening our engagement with all arms of government and have been heartened by the warm reception we have received and the acknowledgement of the strength of our impact data. It is evident that building a pipeline of recurrent government funding will take time and will be well supported by our continued commitment to impact measurement and achievement of a quality accreditation.

We raised \$4.50 for every dollar spent on fundraising



Financial snapshot

Statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2024

ASSETS	2024\$	2023\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	237,547	1,434,220
Trade and other receivables	44,052	20,612
Financial assets	809,679	-
Other assets	21,290	8,744
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,112,568	1,463,576
TOTAL ASSETS	1,112,568	1,463,576
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	73,475	48,354
Employee benefits	81,372	60,985
Grant received in advance	116,455	311,405
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	271,302	420,744
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits	14,284	7,817
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	14,284	7,817
TOTAL LIABILITIES	285,586	428,561
NET ASSETS	826,982	1,035,015
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	826,982	1,035,015
TOTAL EQUITY	826,982	1,035,015

Statement of profit or loss

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$ 2024\$	\$ 2023\$
Revenue	1,492,064	1,804,493
Other income	42,233	14,505
Employee benefits expense	(1,342,767)	(1,213,371)
Program expenses	(171,814)	(201,831)
Administrative expenses	(227,749)	(191,151)
Surplus before income tax	(208,033)	212,645
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year	(208,033)	212,645
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(208,033)	212,645





“ Human nature as an organisation has made a huge impact on my life in so many positive ways, but some of the things I like best about Human Nature are the inclusiveness throughout events while also always keeping time and making space for anyone with big feelings or emotions. The input you receive from us is actually taken into consideration and used to make future events better. ”







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ACNC Registered Charity

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