

2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

HUMAN NATURE



A DECADE OF IMPACT



Acknowledgement of Country and inclusion statement

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.

Celebrating 10 years of healing, connection and transformation for young people in the Northern Rivers

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Disclaimer: Images are posed by models.
Photography by Phil Gallagher.

One young person's journey

Vivani's story

My life at home was very chaotic at times. It was very difficult for me in many ways. I had a stepdad who was my primary father figure, and he was very critical of me, mentally and emotionally abusive most of the time. There was also sexual abuse that I eventually opened up about. On top of that, I was living with my mum, who was also on the receiving end of his abuse. It was really hard for me to witness someone I loved so much being treated that way. It made me feel quite unsafe, and honestly, I carried a lot of sadness and anger.

I tried to find support before Human Nature, but it didn't feel right. I saw a counsellor who was a family friend, and although I was glad to have some support, it felt really hard to open up. Sitting in a room with someone didn't feel natural to me - I'd never really learned how to share my feelings, so it just didn't work.

That changed when I met Amy, who ran Chrysalis at my high school. She created a circle for young women who had experienced trauma or hardship, and it was the first time I felt like opening up was possible. Amy worked for Human Nature, and she told me about a camp they were running. It sounded amazing - being outdoors, with support in nature while adventuring. And the fact that there was financial support available meant I could actually go. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to.

Still, I was nervous at first. I thought: wow, this is a big thing - meeting new people, talking about my feelings but the team made me feel so welcomed.

What really stood out was the sense of community. I realised I wasn't alone, other young people needed support too. Being outside, in nature, made everything feel different. It created a healing space that helped me open up my inner world.

That first camp was a turning point. It was so transformative. For the first time, I felt free to be myself and to begin moving through some of the really traumatic experiences I'd had. I knew they would be received with compassion. Even the adventuring together symbolised what was happening inside me - pushing through challenges in nature as I was pushing through challenges in my own life.

Halfway through that camp, I did something I'd been carrying for years - I disclosed the abuse I'd been through. I had already built trust with one of the therapists, and I'd planned to open up if it felt right. It was so difficult, but I felt supported and they helped me share with my mum. That's what led to us moving out of that home. I don't know if I could have done it without Human Nature. Maybe one day, but it would have been so much harder, and probably taken me years longer.

The support didn't stop when the camp ended. There were people who kept checking in with me every week, and that made a big difference - knowing I wasn't just left on my own after such a huge experience. I went on to join Elev8 (it's where we keep connecting after the program, with camps and activities that help us feel

supported, make friends, and stay on track) where I could reconnect with the same girls I'd met on camp and meet new young people too. It was empowering – I could receive support, but also offer it to others, which was empowering. It gave me a strong sense of community and belonging.

As I got older, I realised I needed more focused support. I was experiencing a lot of anxiety around the end of high school, so I reached out and started one-to-one sessions. That was another turning point with Human Nature. My therapist helped me realise that my destiny was in my hands. She showed me compassion, which helped me learn how to have compassion for myself. I began to see the patterns I had inherited from my family, and that I had the power to change them. I could bring a new sense of self into the world.

Over time, I was invited into Human Nature's youth leadership program. It was so exciting to be in a position where I had been supported so well and could now offer something back. I'll never forget attending the Healthy North Coast event recently – standing alongside other young people, sharing our voices, and knowing people in powerful positions were listening to us. It gave me so much hope for the future of mental health support in Australia.

It was my experience with Human Nature that inspired the path I chose after school and led me to study counselling and psychotherapy. I'd seen firsthand how the therapists changed my life, and I wanted to be able to do that for others. I thought



what an amazing thing to be able to offer the world.

Eventually, I came full circle. I returned to Human Nature as a student on placement, moving from being a young person supported by the programs to being part of the program team. It felt like an initiation into a new part of myself. I could reflect on how far I'd come and begin to practice the skills I'd been studying, supporting other young people the way I'd once been supported.

Looking back, the difference Human Nature made in my life is hard to sum up. They allowed me to move through the biggest challenges I faced as a young person – not alone, but with support, compassion, and community. That healing continues to live in me today. Even when I face difficulties now, I draw on what I found in Human Nature. It's a part of me.

And if another young person was unsure about reaching out? I'd say, I know it can feel strange or scary to open up to people you don't know at first. But give it a go. You might be surprised by the connections you'll build, and the support you'll feel. It could change your life – just like it did mine.

Message from the Chair and CEO

At Human Nature, we know that many of the young people who need support the most are the least likely to ever walk into a clinic. Not because they don't want help, but because the help available doesn't feel safe, relevant, or built for them.

Many of the young people we support have been let down by the people and systems that were meant to protect them. They're labeled as "will not engage" by other services, yet they're ready to connect when approached differently. For those whose trauma happened behind closed doors, the idea of sitting in an office with a stranger and "talking it out" can feel impossible.

That's why Human Nature exists.

Over the last decade we have built and refined our model of care, alongside the young people we serve. Our approach is grounded in a simple but powerful foundation:

Healing takes time. Change requires trust. And both begin in connection.

This belief has shaped every program, every relationship, every decision across ten years of growth and learning and underpins our strategy for the future.

This year's achievements

This past year has shown what's possible when time, trust, and connection come together. Young people requiring specialist engagement are now building resilience, discovering hope, and choosing different paths. Our 2024–29 Strategic Plan is delivering results across five key areas:

- **Strengthened core delivery** – the young people we work with engage with our programs at higher rates than most other organisations in our sector and show measurable improvements in all aspects of their wellbeing.
- **Growing evidence base** – Independent Charles Sturt University evaluation validates our model's effectiveness.
- **Investment in people** – New leadership appointments and accreditation progress.
- **Strong governance** – Sustainable practices supporting long-term impact.
- **Expanded reach** – Launch of Human Nature Private extending access to more families while increasing our income diversification.

Our ambition

Looking ahead, our ambition is bold: Human Nature will be recognised as a national leader in youth mental health, delivering an impactful model that challenges the status quo, addresses the needs of young people facing barriers to support, and sets more young people on a positive life trajectory.

“

I felt understood and heard by my counsellor... I like that I don't have to be restricted to one room or building and can go out and actually move around a bit more.

– Young person

”



The challenge and invitation

Our greatest challenge remains funding security. While generous donors, grants, and our new initiative Human Nature Private (our fee-for-service social enterprise program) provide vital support, sustainable expansion requires long-term investment partners who share our vision.

With committed funding, Human Nature can scale its proven, evidence-informed model to reach more young people, create lasting impact in regional communities, and help reshape youth mental health care in Australia. We invite partners, funders, and supporters to join us in ensuring every young person has access to support that truly works.

Because in the end, this isn't just about mental health services. It's about giving young people the foundation they need to thrive - now and into their futures.

Through this report, we will lay out the evidence of our successes and impacts and the challenges that we are preparing to meet in the future, as well as the story of how - over a decade of social and environmental crises - we have met every challenge to become leaders in the sector.

Jen Parke
CEO

Stephen Grant
Board Chair



Our model in action and the impact it creates

Across Australia, young people are facing a crisis. The 2023 State of the Nation report found that more than a third of secondary school students report high levels of anxiety or depression, with no improvement since the pandemic years. National data from the ABS shows that almost 40% of young Australians aged 16–24, over one million people, experienced a mental health disorder in the past year, up from just 26% in 2007. Suicide remains the leading cause of death for young Australians aged 15–24.

In our Northern Rivers region, these challenges are amplified, with higher-than-State average rates of self-harm, suicide attempts, depression, and anxiety.

Yet the young people most in need – those living with complex trauma, family violence, grief, poverty, or discrimination – are often the least able to access help. Traditional clinic-based services feel unsafe, unfamiliar, or out of reach. Waitlists are long, costs are high, and stigma is real.

How Human Nature steps in

This is where Human Nature steps in. We work with 14–18 year olds who have been unable to engage with other services, offering accessible, long-term, free support through therapy and mentoring delivered outdoors in safe, non-clinical spaces, using a flexible, youth-led approach that meets young people where they are.

We prioritise young people who are disengaged from school, facing complex challenges, or living with trauma. Rather than rigid intake criteria, we focus on building trust and responding flexibly to each young person's readiness, capacity, and strengths.

We deliver our support through three core programs: Activ8 provides individual therapy and mentoring outdoors, Elev8 offers ongoing peer connection through group activities, and camps provide immersive skill building and therapeutic experiences.

“

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.

– Young person

”

Stories of change

Every young person's story is different, but many share a common challenge. Across Australia, thousands of young people fall into the "missing middle" of mental health care – whose needs are too complex for everyday supports like schools, GPs, or short-term counselling, and others who simply cannot engage with a medicalised model of care that feels unsafe, irrelevant, or stigmatising.

Through our nature-based, relational model of therapy and mentoring, we walk alongside them at their pace, building trust and creating the conditions for healing and growth. Through this section we will be taking a detailed look at how our model works and using three case studies of young people we have supported – Ruby*, Oscar* and Jai*.

Stage 1:

Removing barriers to access

Ruby is 15. She was referred to the school counsellor by the welfare team at her school but after one appointment said she could not go again. She lives with her mother and siblings in temporary accommodation after their rental home flooded in 2022. The school mental health nurse said "she was open to having counselling outdoors and while doing activities."

Oscar is 14. He lost his father suddenly last year. He lives with his mum and two younger siblings, smokes cannabis daily, and has received formal cautions from the Police for assault and property damage. His mother says "he refuses to go to a service where other young people will see him and says he won't sit in a room with a stranger."

**Names changed for confidentiality reasons.*

Jai is 16. They live with their parents, who are not supportive about their gender identity.

They excel at school but experience bullying and homophobia. They saw a private psychologist twice but said they didn't feel understood and have not returned.

These experiences are all too common. **100% of young people supported by Human Nature face barriers to engaging in clinical settings.** Nearly a quarter arrive with a diagnosis of complex PTSD, and over half are at risk of leaving school.

For young people like Ruby, Oscar, and Jai, there's a chasm between them and the help they need. Human Nature builds the bridge – starting with an intake process designed to meet young people and their families where they are, removing barriers, and creating a pathway to support.

Stage 2:

A different kind of intake

For many families, getting through the door is often the hardest part. Human Nature's intake process is deliberately different: trauma responsive, flexible, empathetic, and persistent.

Young people can be referred by a parent/carer, school, GP, government or not-for-profit service, or themselves. Intake is handled by our Team Leader, a Mental Health Accredited Social Worker, through gentle, supportive conversations over the phone, at home, or in another place that feels comfortable.



At intake, Human Nature uses the **Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST)** a nationally consistent, evidence-based framework that helps identify the right level of mental health support for each young person.

By collecting ratings across eight key areas, covering both clinical needs and broader life context, the IAR-DST gives a clear picture of the level of care required at that moment. For Human Nature, this means we can triage effectively, match young people with the right supports from the outset, and make sure no one is under or over-served.

This approach not only builds confidence for GPs, schools, and other referrers, but also reflects our commitment to care that is consistent, transparent, and tailored to each young person's unique needs.

At intake, 83% of Human Nature's participants are assessed as Level 3 – requiring a moderate intensity mental health service with structured, frequent, and intensive support, in community locations.

Unlike many services, we do not turn people away for not fitting rigid criteria. Instead, we focus on understanding each young person's needs, strengths, and hopes, and do whatever it takes to help them feel safe enough to engage.

Many of the young people referred to Human Nature arrive with significant family challenges:

- **21%** have parents with mental health challenges and 1 in 4 live with domestic or family violence.
- **28%** have parents who use, or have used, substances problematically, adding stress and instability to daily life.
- **24%** have symptoms of complex PTSD.
- **54%** are disengaged from school.

By understanding these realities from the outset, Human Nature can provide the flexibility, persistence, and safe, supportive spaces that help young people and families engage with services and start their journey toward healing.



Suicide risk among young people

Suicide prevention and early intervention are critical in our region.

At intake:

17% of young people had previously attempted suicide

Around **35% were experiencing** suicidal thoughts or engaging in self-harm

These figures highlight the urgent need for timely, tailored support to help young people stay safe and get the care they need.



Stage 3:

First contact and building trust

When a young person engages with Human Nature, their allocated practitioner begins building rapport in whatever space feels safest – on a walk, at the beach, creating art, or alongside animals. Every first session is tailored to each young person's interests, strengths, and unique needs. This stage is about building connection before tackling problems.

Ruby grew up with domestic violence, a father in jail, and was sexually abused by a relative. Living in temporary pod accommodation had left her disconnected from everyone around her. Through Activ8 sessions at a wildlife centre with her therapist and spending quiet time with horses, she found a safe space to reconnect and slowly begin trusting again.

Oscar was very close to his father before his sudden death and struggled with violent outbursts and a prior suicide attempt. His Activ8 sessions began in a park with his mum, then progressed to nature-based activities like fishing, rock climbing, and golfing. These physical challenges provided a non-threatening space to express grief and use his energy positively.

Jai is artistic, academic, and transitioning gender. Bullied at school and rejected at home, with experiences of self-harm, they found that creative, nature-based Activ8 sessions, drawing or weaving with their Therapeutic Mentor under a tree, provided the space they needed to feel understood and supported while learning to regulate their emotions.

These individual journeys reflect a broader pattern that sets Human Nature apart. Nationally, most young people using a Mental Health Treatment Plan attend fewer than six sessions – often not enough to make lasting change. By contrast, **half of Human Nature clients continue for six**

or more sessions, over a third have 10 or more sessions and many stay engaged well beyond that, giving them the time and support needed to make meaningful progress.

Through these tailored approaches, Human Nature helps young people at breaking point begin to trust, develop skills, and find a path forward, showing how removing barriers and creating safe, flexible spaces makes lasting change possible.



⁶ Rickwood D, McEachran J, Saw A, Telford N, Trethowan J, McGorry P (2023) Sixteen years of innovation in youth mental healthcare: Outcomes for young people attending Australia's headspace centre services. PLoS ONE 18(6): e0282040. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282040>

Stage 4:

The therapeutic journey

Once trust is in place, the real work begins. Each week, practitioners meet young people one-on-one for up to 90 minutes. They walk alongside young people, blending conversation with outdoor activities and skill-building, and evidence informed therapeutic interventions. Sessions are youth-led and guided by validated tools – Outcome Rating Scale (ORS), Session Rating Scale (SRS), and My Mind Star™ – which keep young people at the centre of their care and allow progress to be tracked in real time.

My Mind Star™ tracks how young people are progressing across different areas of life known to impact mental health. Over the past year, most showed measurable improvements – from school engagement and emotional wellbeing to self-esteem and relationships. These aren't just numbers, they're the building blocks of a brighter future.

Percentage of young people making progress across the following My Mind Star™ domains in 2024/25

School, training & work



66%

Self-esteem



63%

Feelings and emotions



61%

Friends & relationships



46%

How you use your time



46%

Healthy lifestyle



44%

Where you live



34%

Outcome Rating Scale wellbeing scores also rose from 22.0 at intake to 29.5 at exit – a clinically significant improvement. In plain language: young people reported feeling more able to manage challenges and more hopeful about the future.



Ruby's journey through My Mind Star

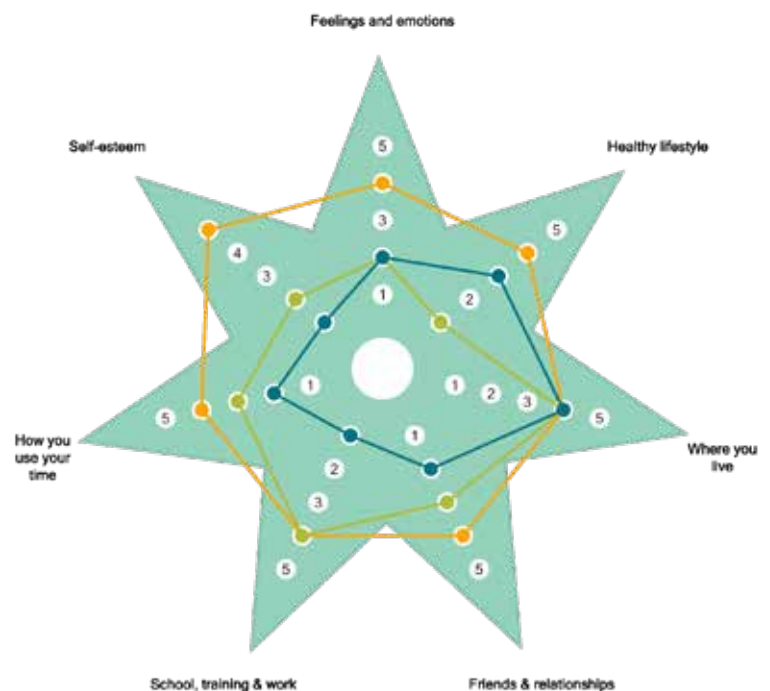
Ruby's story illustrates what these changes look like in practice. Over 12 months of care (27 therapist appointments and 18 case management sessions), she moved from being stuck or unsafe in most areas to actively taking steps forward.

- From struggling to talk about feelings, she now applies strategies to manage emotions.
- From isolation, she has started building trust and seeking support in relationships.
- From disengagement, she is attending school more regularly and planning for the future.
- Self-esteem and lifestyle have shifted from early awareness to positive action.

Ruby's trajectory reflects what we see again and again: with the right support, young people can move from crisis to hope.

Her self-harming and suicidal thoughts have decreased, and she now speaks with hope about her future – telling her practitioner, “I want to be a vet.” With Human Nature's support, Ruby completed a Victims of Crime application and was helped to get her driver's licence, giving her a new sense of independence and possibility.

Stage 5: Transformation and lasting change



- E1: 1st Star
- E1: 2nd Star
- E1: 5th Star

For the young people we work with, progress isn't just about feeling a little better, it's about taking meaningful steps forward in life. My Mind Star™ results show measurable improvements in emotional wellbeing, self-esteem, and relationships – building skills that last a lifetime.

With this foundation of trust and support, young people begin achieving key milestones – returning to school, finding work, repairing family relationships – and discovering their own voice and agency.

Oscar's journey has been one of finding safe outlets for grief and anger. Over time, his violent outbursts reduced, and his relationship with his mum has grown more respectful. He's cut back on cannabis use and discovered a talent for indoor rock climbing, forming friendships and becoming part of a supportive community – with a 12-month membership provided by Human Nature to encourage his progress. As his sense of belonging grows, and his trust in therapeutic relationships deepens, he is no longer coming to the attention of police.

For Jai, the change has been about connection and self-acceptance. Through mentoring and nature-based therapy, Jai has found safe peer supports, has begun to advocate for themselves at school, and has developed a stronger sense of self-esteem. Self-harm has stopped, hope for the future is growing, and Jai's family is taking small but meaningful steps toward acceptance, supported by resources and guidance from Jai's mentor.

Together, these stories show that Human Nature's approach doesn't just respond to crisis – it gives young people the tools and confidence to build a life they want to live. When barriers are removed and young people lead their own journey, change isn't just possible – it lasts.

Stage 6: Outcomes that last

The true measure of change isn't only what young people achieve during their time with Human Nature – it's what they carry forward. Six to twelve months later, participants continue to apply the skills, confidence, and connections they built with us, shaping their own lives and contributing to their communities.

Ruby has moved forward with independence, attending therapy confidently and using the resources she has secured to create a stable life. Oscar is balancing school, sport, and friendships, sustaining the protective routines and supportive networks that once felt out of reach. Jai is channeling their confidence and lived experience into leadership and advocacy, guiding peers and shaping youth mental health initiatives.

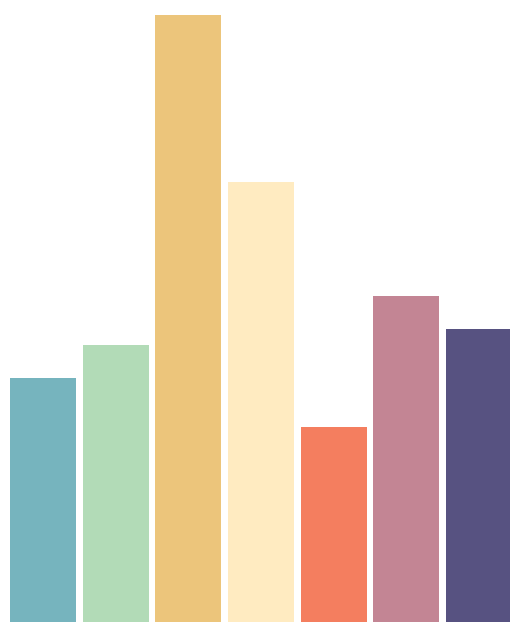
From stuck to thriving

Young people at Human Nature make remarkable progress, and the data proves it. The My Mind Star™ results we see opposite show how far they travel on their Journey of Change: those who once felt unsafe and isolated are now building friendships, creating safer homes and routines, discovering healthier ways to care for themselves, and developing the confidence and skills to shape their future. Behind every percentage point is a young person moving from surviving day-to-day to thriving with purpose and hope.

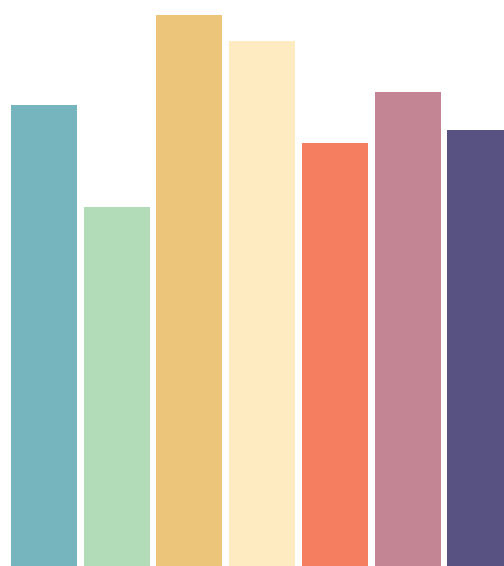
These stories aren't isolated, they reflect a broader pattern. Across 2024/25 our data shows that: 61% of young people leave Human Nature with greater emotional regulation, 70% maintain or grow in confidence and coping skills, and 66% strengthen engagement with school, training, or work. One third actively participate in group activities, sustaining peer support and community connection.



● Feelings and emotions ● Healthy lifestyle ● Where you live ● Friends & Relationships
 ● School, training & work ● How you use your time ● Self-esteem



First Mind Star™



At exit

Young people with moderate mental health support needs-often referred to as the “missing middle”- face significant barriers to accessing appropriate care in Australia. The Human Nature program, a nature based, trauma-informed mental health service operating in Northern NSW, demonstrates strong outcomes in improving wellbeing among adolescents aged 14-18.

Snowdon, N., Huda, M.M., Allan, J., Dalton, H., Vennell, C. Evaluation of the Human Nature Program – Final Report, August 2025. Orange NSW, Australia: Rural Health Research Institute, Charles Sturt University; 2025.

The Human Nature difference

Independent research from Charles Sturt University confirms what we see every day: Human Nature’s nature-based, relational model delivers change that lasts. When young people are supported in a flexible, youth-led way, they don’t just recover from crisis – they build the skills, confidence, and connections to thrive. Ruby’s independence, Oscar’s belonging, and Jai’s leadership are proof: with the right support, young people can turn survival into a future they choose.



A decade of change, connection and growth

For ten years, Human Nature has grown from a grassroots idea into a proven model of youth mental health care. Along the way, we've adapted through challenges, built new programs hand-in-hand with young people, and earned the trust of our community. This journey has been one of dedication, innovation, and constant evolution.

2008–2015

From vision to venture

Human Nature's roots lie in the passion and collaboration of Graham Pringle and our Founder and psychologist, Andy Hamilton, who shared a belief in the power of nature-based adventures to change young lives. Together with a network of professionals, they piloted the Recre8 program – multi-day bush expeditions that combined therapeutic care with teamwork and challenge.

Recre8 proved transformative: young people built trust, resilience, and hope through human-powered journeys in the outdoors. Over the years, the model adapted through partnerships and persistence, even as funding was uncertain, what remained constant were the principles that still guide Human Nature today:

- **Trust first** – building strong therapeutic relationships
- **Nature heals** – using outdoor journeys as the setting for growth
- **Youth-led** – empowering young people to take responsibility and lead

2015–2017

Planting the seed

Building on the lessons and successes of the Recre8 expeditions, Human Nature emerged as a fully independent charity, founded on the belief that young people heal best when supported in nature, in safe and trusting relationships. With the guidance of the original team and the backing of our first major donors, the Seaton Foundation, and subsequently the Flannery Foundation, we formalised the organisation, creating the stability and structure needed to grow.

Milestone

- Human Nature Adventure Therapy officially established (2015)





2018-2019

Weathering storms

Through natural disasters, including Cyclone Debbie floods and the Black Summer bushfires, our small team kept showing up for young people. These challenges, shaped our resilience and deepened our commitment to stand with the community, no matter what.

Milestone

- Elev8 launched

2020-2021

Building roots

When COVID-19 closed clinical services across the country, Human Nature grew. We launched Activ8, ensuring continuity of care in safe spaces where young people could build trust and hope. Our flexible outreach model proved its value when others were forced online.

Milestone

- First structured Activ8 program with 26 young people
- Two Elev8 camps delivered



Our program journey at a glance

Recre8

- Multi-day therapeutic expeditions in nature.
- Focused on teamwork, trust, and resilience.
- Foundation program that shaped Human Nature's approach.

Elev8 (from 2018)

- Small group camps and activities co-designed with past participants.
- Provides ongoing connection, peer support, and a sense of belonging.
- Helps young people stay engaged after completing other programs.

Activ8 (from 2020)

- One-to-one therapy and mentoring delivered outdoors.
- Builds strong therapeutic relationships in safe, flexible settings.
- Accessible, non-clinical alternative to mainstream services.

2021-2022

Standing strong in crisis

When catastrophic floods devastated the Northern Rivers, Human Nature was one of the first services back on the ground, visiting young people in homes, hotels, and evacuation centres. Trust in our model deepened, particularly among Aboriginal families.

Milestone

- 70 young people supported through Activ8
- Impact tools (My Mind Star and Feedback Informed Therapy) embedded
- Three camps delivered over 3 to 10 days each

2022-2023

Growing reach and trust

These overlapping crises left many young people feeling unsafe, disconnected, and anxious about the future. Human Nature became a trusted place to process these experiences, rebuild confidence, and reconnect with community - with growing recognition among Aboriginal families who saw our programs as culturally safe and deeply supportive.

Milestone

- 105 young people engaged in Activ8, 25% identifying as Aboriginal
- 28 young people engaged in Elev8
- Two camps held





2023-2024

A place of belonging

Our programs became spaces of belonging and pride. Young people found connection not only to themselves, but to Country and community.

Milestone

- 129 Activ8 clients and 35 Elev8 participants across 9 events - with one-third of participants identifying as Aboriginal
- Four camps delivered

2024-2025

Building for the future

Human Nature consolidated a decade of learning and impact, strengthening its programs and organisational foundations. Independent research from Charles Sturt University confirmed the effectiveness of our model, accreditation got underway, and new leadership positioned the organisation to expand its reach nationally. Young people continued to thrive, with programs designed to support wellbeing, resilience, and belonging.

Milestone

- 141 young people supported through Activ8
- 35 participants in eight Elev8 events
- 4 camps delivered for flood affected young people, CSU evaluation completed
- Accreditation process underway
- New CEO appointed



This year's highlights

real change, proven impact

141

young people aged 14-18 supported

across the Northern Rivers - all facing barriers that mainstream services couldn't overcome.

1038

individual face to face appointments delivered

each session offering a place where young people felt safe and heard.

1252

case management appointments delivered

connecting young people and families to supports such as housing, emergency relief, parenting support and practical aspects such as obtaining drivers licenses and employment support.



7.5 months: average duration of care in Activ8. Far longer than the few sessions most young people receive in mainstream services. This consistency is what allows trust, healing, and real change to take root.



Made significant progress toward national accreditation, strengthening quality and safety.



Launched Human Nature Private. Our fee-for-service social enterprise program expanding access to families seeking long-term, nature-based care while expanding our income diversification.



Partnered with Charles Sturt University for the first independent research evaluation of our programs - providing robust evidence of impact.



83% **engagement rate**

This means that 4 out of 5 young people referred to Human Nature successfully engaged in our programs. This is far higher than most services, especially for young people with multiple vulnerabilities proving that our flexible, outdoors-based approach works where others don't.

93% **of young people made positive change in at least one area of life**

From managing emotions to reconnecting with school.

61% **of young people built stronger mental health skills**

Learning to manage feelings, recognise unhelpful thinking, and cope more effectively.

66% **of young people re-engaged with education, training or work**

From managing emotions to reconnecting with school.

63% **of young people grew in confidence and belonging**

The protective factors that set young people up for long-term resilience.

“

We found the Human Nature program offers a scalable, evidence-based solution to fill a critical gap in youth mental health care.

Its success underscores the need for policy innovation that embraces non-traditional, inclusive, and therapeutic environments because investing in such models can transform outcomes for young people who are currently underserved by existing systems.

- Professor Allan,
Charles Sturt
University's Centre for
Rural Health Research

”

Validating our work: Charles Sturt University's independent evaluation

For ten years, Human Nature has filled a critical gap in youth mental health care, supporting young people who are considered too hard to reach by conventional, clinic based services. Stories from the young people and families we walk alongside have long shown that our model works. In recent years, we've deepened this understanding by adopting impact measurement tools that both demonstrate our organisational impact and meaningfully involve young people in their own care. At the same time, we knew that to influence policy and secure long-term investment, we needed independent, rigorous evidence.

In 2024–25, we set out to build that evidence base. Our then Head of Operations (now CEO) presented Human Nature's approach at several national conferences, sharing how a nature-based, relational model of therapy and mentoring was changing lives in the Northern Rivers.

One of these presentations was at a Manna Institute event - a virtual research institute dedicated to improving mental health and wellbeing in rural, regional and remote Australia. It was through this event that we were connected to Charles Sturt University's Rural Health Research Institute, which conducts leading-edge research on rural, remote, Indigenous and global health. This marked the beginning of a valuable partnership.

Rigorous research, credible results

Together, we designed the first university published evaluation of Human Nature's work - a retrospective cohort study involving 106 young people aged 14–18. The research team conducted robust statistical analysis with adjustment for confounding variables, ensuring the findings would meet the highest academic standards. The aims of the study were to:

- Measure the effectiveness of our program in improving young people's wellbeing, relationships, educational engagement and personal development
- Explore whether certain characteristics - such as age, gender, or cultural background - influenced outcomes

The research team analysed routinely collected data from participants who had completed at least two My Mind Star assessments. This rigorous methodology demonstrates that our outcomes aren't just anecdotal - they represent measurable, statistically significant change validated by independent academic researchers.

Reaching those who need it most

The study revealed the depth of vulnerability among the young people we serve, demonstrating that Human Nature is successfully reaching exactly those who fall through the cracks of mainstream services:

63% Had experienced family and domestic violence

53% Were dealing with multiple vulnerabilities

42% Had identified mental health concerns

27% Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

18% Had disabilities or neurodiversity

42% Lived in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities

These figures help explain why many of these young people struggle to engage with traditional clinical services, and highlight the importance of Human Nature's flexible, trauma-informed approach in reaching this underserved population.

Sustained therapeutic relationships

The research documented remarkable engagement levels that distinguish Human Nature from mainstream services. Participants attended an average of 26 free sessions each – a level of sustained, intensive support rarely available to young people through conventional systems.

Proven outcomes: moving from distress to thriving

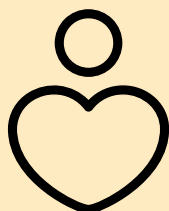
The findings, now published, show that Human Nature's unique, relational, and nature-based approach is making measurable and lasting difference:

- **Overall wellbeing transformation:** Outcome Rating Scale scores rose from 22.0 at intake to 29.5 at exit, moving participants from below to above the clinical cut-off.
- **Comprehensive life improvements:** Across all seven My Mind Star™ domains, participants made major gains, especially in self-esteem, school engagement, and managing emotions.

These improvements remained significant across diverse demographic and social groups.

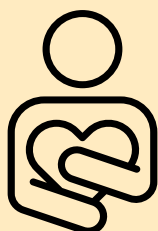


Key findings



Improved Wellbeing

Participants showed significant improvements in symptom distress, interpersonal relationships, social role functioning, and overall wellbeing (ORS score increased from 22.01 to 29.52; $p < 0.001$)



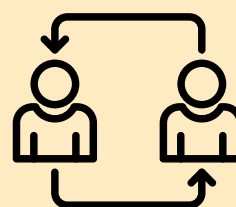
Life satisfaction gains

Across seven domains of the My Mind Star scale, participants reported substantial gains, particularly in self-esteem (AOR = 6.99), time use (AOR = 6.72), and educational engagement (AOR = 5.50)



Inclusive reach

The program effectively engaged vulnerable populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (27%), LGBTQIA+ (11%), and those from socio-economically disadvantaged communities (42%)



Sustained engagement

Average of 26 sessions per participant

A model for system change

This independent evaluation has done more than validate our work, it has laid the foundation for broader mental health reform. The Charles Sturt University research team developed formal policy recommendations for government, positioning Human Nature as a scalable solution to youth mental health service gaps. Their policy brief calls for investment in nature-based interventions and recognition of non-traditional therapeutic environments as essential components of comprehensive youth mental health care.

The economics are compelling – by providing 26 sessions of intensive, free support per young person, Human Nature delivers exceptional value while achieving outcomes that mainstream services struggle to match – at a fraction of the cost of crisis interventions or hospitalisation.





“

Human Nature matches the right support worker with the young person, offering a broad range of approaches and activities. Skilled and knowledgeable staff with empathy.

– Parent

”

A fundamental shift in how we approach youth mental health

The study confirms what we've long advocated: young people with complex needs who cannot engage with conventional services can achieve significant, lasting improvements when support is delivered in flexible, relational, and nature-based environments. This research validates not just our approach, but the urgent need for policy innovation that embraces diverse therapeutic environments and long-term, relationship-based care.

For government and donors, the message is clear – investing in Human Nature's evidence-based model ensures young people who would otherwise fall through service gaps have the chance to heal, grow, and thrive.





Launching Human Nature Private our fee-for-service program

In 2025, we launched our first fee-for-service program - a social enterprise designed to expand access to care while strengthening our financial sustainability. While philanthropy and non-government grants continue to be the backbone of our funding, this new approach also allows us to strengthen our financial sustainability and expand access to our evidence-based model.

A proven model for teen mental health

Families enrol their teen in six months of personalised therapeutic support, delivered by our specialist team of therapists and mentors. Through relationship-driven care, adventure based activities, and one-on-one sessions, young people build trust, confidence, and the skills to navigate life's challenges. Parents are supported every step of the way with clear guidance, transparent costs, and regular opportunities to reassess fit.

A milestone for sustainability and impact

This milestone positions Human Nature as both a charity and a social enterprise - balancing philanthropy and grants with a sustainable funding stream. Most importantly, it ensures more young people across the Northern Rivers can access transformative, long-term mental health support when and where they need it most.

Find out more

If your teen has been struggling and you're unsure where to turn, scan the QR code to learn more about Human Nature Private. Discover how our personalised, relationship-driven support can help your teen build confidence, navigate challenges, and take positive steps toward a brighter future.



“

This is the first psychological service after so many traditional models that my son has been positively receptive to – and he continues to want to engage

– Parent of a young person we’ve supported.

”



Strategic priorities and the decade ahead

Over the next ten years, Human Nature aims to transform the way Australia supports young people who cannot tolerate, access or benefit from current service models.

Building on our strong foundation in the Northern Rivers, we are committed to becoming a national leader in evidence-based, innovative approaches that give young people access to care that truly works. Our strategy focuses on accreditation, replication readiness, and meaningful government engagement – laying the groundwork for scalable, sustainable impact across the country.

Building trust through accreditation

Accreditation under the *National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations* is central to this growth. Achieving accreditation will demonstrate that Human Nature operates at the highest clinical and governance standards, positioning us as a credible, trusted partner for government and other large-scale funders. It ensures sustainability by embedding continuous improvement, risk management, and quality assurance into our culture. We are currently on track to achieve accreditation by May 2026.

Replication readiness for scaling what works

Replication readiness is equally critical. With a proven model, we are preparing to scale impact beyond the Northern Rivers by creating a framework that can be delivered in diverse communities nationwide. Our aim is to close critical gaps in youth mental health support across Australia, particularly for young people who do not thrive in conventional, clinic-based settings.

Shaping the future of youth mental health

Strategic government engagement will be a key enabler of this next phase. Despite the proven effectiveness of our model, securing government recognition and funding remains a challenge that we're actively addressing through evidence building and relationship development. We are building strong relationships with mental health agencies and policymakers, showcasing research-backed outcomes, and demonstrating how Human Nature can complement and strengthen the broader youth mental health ecosystem.

“

Thank you for supporting me over the years! My heart feels so thankful.

– Young person

”



Our people are at the heart of our impact

Human Nature's transformational impact rests entirely on the expertise, compassion, and resilience of our team. We are investing in staff wellbeing, providing a safe and inclusive workplace, and equipping our team with the skills required for service excellence and future expansion. By listening to our people, supporting their growth, and creating a positive organisational culture, we ensure our workforce remains our greatest strength.

A vision for the decade ahead

By aligning our strategy around accreditation, replication, workforce development, and government collaboration, Human Nature is not just sustaining its work, we are preparing to scale it. The decade ahead is about giving more young people the meaningful support, tools, and opportunities they need to thrive, and creating a movement that transforms youth mental health across Australia.

An investment in Human Nature supports more than an organisation; it fuels a vision of youth mental health care grounded in human connection, trust, and understanding. By meeting young people where they are and providing consistent, compassionate support, transformation becomes not just possible, but inevitable.



Founder's reflection: a decade of listening, learning and leading

Ten years. It's hard to believe that now over a decade has passed since we first planted the seed of Human Nature Adventure Therapy. What began as a dream to do things differently, has grown into an organisation with deep roots, proven impact, and a community of people who believe change is possible.

When I look back to those first Recre8 adventure therapy expeditions, I remember the uncertainty, the determination, and the audacity of believing that something radically different was possible. I also remember the faces of the first young people who entrusted us with their pain, their silence, their guarded hearts. Watching them gradually open, reconnect, and glimpse a different future, lit a fire in me that still burns as fiercely today.

From spark to beacon

Over the past decade, that spark has become a beacon. Human Nature has supported hundreds of young people who might otherwise have slipped into tragedy, and instead, we have seen lives rewritten. Young people once isolated, self-harming, or in the grip of despair now laugh with peers, find purpose, and reconnect with family. Parents tell us they've got their child back. Teachers tell us their students are thriving. And time and again, young people themselves tell us, "I finally feel like someone gets me."

Resilience through adversity

None of this journey has been easy. The past decade has tested us with floods, fires, a pandemic, the constant struggle for funds, and the relentless rise of youth mental distress. But every challenge has strengthened our resolve, refined our model, and readied us for scale. We now stand on strong foundations: a holistic suite of programs, robust evaluation frameworks, and a track record of lasting impact.

The community that carries us

I am deeply proud of what we've built, not just the programs and the outcomes, but the extraordinary community that has carried us here. To the team, past and present, who have poured their skill, heart, and resilience into this work: thank you. To the donors and supporters who believed in us before the evidence was documented, who sustained us through setbacks and celebrated every breakthrough: you are part of every story of healing, every young life reclaimed.

“

My son won't attend other therapy as he thrives in non-clinical settings where he feels relaxed and grounded. The service and staff are always flexible and accommodating. I am thankful for the difference it makes in my son and our family's lives.

– Parent of a participant

”



The drive forward

Yet, as much as we celebrate this decade of growth, I am acutely aware that the need is greater than ever. Week in, week out, we are forced to turn away young people because we don't have the resources to meet demand. Behind every “no” is a life at risk, a family in despair, a community impacted. That is what drives me into the next decade.

A national movement

Our vision is gutsy: to ensure that no young person has to fall through the cracks; to see our proven, nature-based, relational model scaled so that communities across Australia can access it; to

break the cycles of trauma and disadvantage that devastate lives and cost us all so dearly.

Ten years ago, this was a dream. Today, it is a living, growing reality. Tomorrow, with your support, it can be a national movement that reshapes how we care for young people.

With gratitude and determination,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Hamilton'.

Andy Hamilton

Founder, Human Nature Adventure Therapy



Our supporter community

Human Nature exists because of the generosity of people and organisations who believe in a better future for young people. Almost all of the life-changing support we provide is made possible through philanthropy, the trust, care, and commitment of those who choose to walk alongside us.

We are deeply grateful to every donor who shares our vision. Whether you are a foundation investing in long-term change, a business championing youth wellbeing, a community group rallying together, or an individual making a personal gift, your support is the reason we can continue to meet young people where they are and help them find hope, connection, and purpose.

Together, you are our donor community, the heartbeat of Human Nature.

Trusts and Foundations

Aledal Foundation
Born This Way Foundation
Brinsmead Hill Family Foundation
CCI Fund
Community Impact Foundation
Ereshkigal Foundation
Excelsior Foundation
Flannery Foundation
George Lewin Foundation
The GW Foundation
Gumtree Foundation
inGrained Foundation
James Frizelle Charitable Foundation
James N. Kirby Foundation
Joseph Family Foundation
Kassa-Miller Giving
Light Earth Foundation
Northern Rivers Community Foundation
Macpherson Kelley Foundation
Paskeville Foundation
Seaton Foundation
St. George Foundation
The L & R Uechtritz Foundation
TAL Foundation



Corporate and Community Supporters

Country Women's Association Ballina
Future Generation Global
Healthy North Coast
Mick Fanning Charity Golf Day
NSW Ministry of Health
Social Futures
Tropical Fruit World



Individual supporters (\$1,000+)

John and Rachel Akehurst
Vicki Brooke
Pam and Martin Brook
Richard and Kathy Carter
Lisa Joel
Melinda Johnston
Margaret Kirby
Tim Mundy
Jane Mundy
Radek & Helen Sali
Belinda Seaton
David Trewern
Josephine Wolanski
Arnold Metcalf

We extend our gratitude to our broader community of donors who make regular contributions to Human Nature and to those individuals who prefer to remain anonymous.

Break the Cycle

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Pauly James, whose incredible solo ride around Australia – 18,000km of grit, sweat, and determination – is raising vital funds and awareness for Human Nature. Pauly's "Break the Cycle" journey is inspiring communities nationwide and showing what's possible when one person chooses to make a difference.

On behalf of Pauly and the entire Human Nature team, thank you to our incredible community of supporters from across Australia. Your generosity and commitment are helping to break the cycle and ensure more young people can access the mental health support they deserve.

Honorary members

Belinda Seaton
Kirstan Flannery
Andy Hamilton



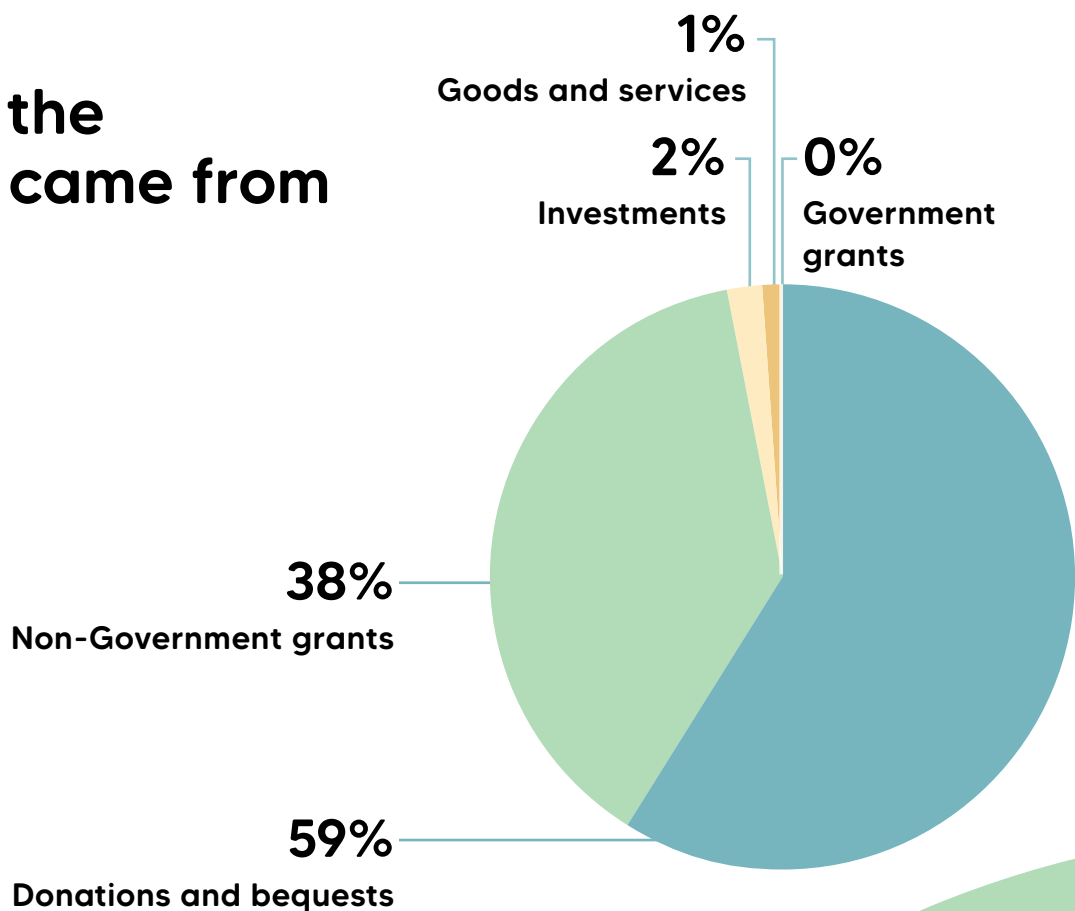
Financial snapshot

In FY2025, thanks to our generous community of supporters, Human Nature raised \$1.85 million to support young people across the Northern Rivers. Most of this came from donations, bequests, and philanthropic grants, a powerful sign of growing belief in our mission. We also began laying the groundwork for our fee-for-service social enterprise model, marking an exciting step toward greater financial independence.

We continue to prioritise impact: two-thirds of all funds went directly to delivering our programs. At the same time, we've invested in building strong relationships with donors and funders, and in the governance and systems that keep our organisation strong, safe, and accountable.

Our fundraising efforts were highly efficient – for every \$1 invested in fundraising, almost \$6 was raised. This demonstrates the strength of our community of supporters and the growing recognition of Human Nature's impact.

Where the money came from



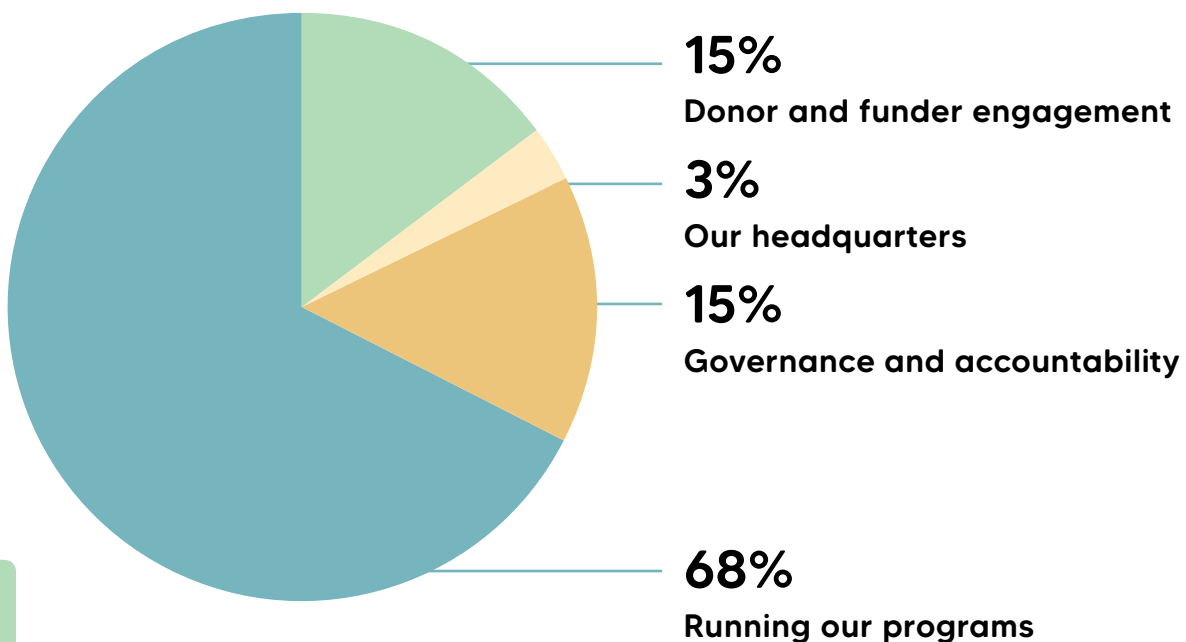
While we drew on reserves to meet rising demand and invest in program growth, our revenue grew by more than 20% on the previous year, showing real momentum and increasing community support.

Looking ahead, our focus is on diversifying income and scaling sustainably. We will continue to nurture our incredible donor and philanthropic partnerships, while expanding our fee-for-service offering. These steps will help build a strong and resilient foundation for growth - so we can support even more young people to move from surviving to thriving.

We raised almost \$6 for every dollar spent on fundraising



Where our money was used



Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	300,910	237,547
Trade and other receivables	79,837	44,052
Financial Assets	605,041	809,679
Other assets	7,114	21,290
Total Current Assets	992,902	1,112,568
Total Non-current Assets	30,442	0
Total Assets	1,023,344	1,112,568
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	78,378	73,475
Employee benefits	76,656	81,372
Grant received in advance	161,390	116,455
Total Current Liabilities	316,424	271,302
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits	23,569	14,282
Total Non-current Liabilities	23,569	14,282
Total Liabilities	339,993	285,584
NET ASSETS	683,351	826,984
Accumulated surplus	683,351	826,982
EQUITY	683,351	826,982

Statement of profit or loss

For the year ended 30 June 2024

		\$
REVENUE		
Revenue	1,812,145	1,492,064
Other income	33,593	42,233
Employee benefits expense	(1,568,141)	(1,342,767)
Program expenses	(182,317)	(171,814)
Administrative expenses	(238,911)	(227,749)
Surplus before income tax	-143,631	(208,033)
Income tax expense		-
Surplus for the year	(143,631)	(208,033)
Total comprehensive income for the year	(143,631)	(208,033)



How you can support Human Nature

Human Nature is made possible by people who believe that every young person deserves the chance to heal, grow and thrive. Our impact is built on community - individuals, philanthropists and government partners who stand alongside us to make sure no young person falls through the cracks. There are many ways you can join us in shaping the next decade of change.

Individuals and community supporters

Every contribution, big or small, helps us reach more young people with the support they need. You can:

- Make a one-off gift or become a regular monthly donor to ensure ongoing care.
- Host a fundraiser, gather friends for an event, or dedicate a birthday to support young people.



Philanthropic partners

Major gifts and philanthropic partnerships give us the freedom to dream bigger and do more.

By investing in Human Nature, you:

- Help us provide tailored, long-term therapeutic support to young people who can't access it elsewhere.
- Fuel both immediate impact and broader change by strengthening an innovative, scalable model that's reshaping how youth mental health support is delivered.
- Become part of a community of visionary supporters committed to rewriting the future of mental health in Australia.

Corporate supporters

- Corporate partnerships are an exciting way for businesses to stand alongside Human Nature and demonstrate leadership in youth mental health and community wellbeing. We offer a range of opportunities for alignment:
- Corporate donation – make a financial contribution or provide in-kind support that directly funds our programs for young people.
- Sponsorship – align your brand with a specific event, campaign or program, co-branding assets and amplifying impact while supporting meaningful outcomes for young people.
- Partnership – build a deeper, long-term relationship with Human Nature built on strong values alignment, shared goals, and a minimum guaranteed commitment that sustains and grows our capacity to serve young people.
- Fundraising for us – companies can also engage staff and customers through creative fundraising initiatives, such as percentage-of-product campaigns or workplace events.



Corporate support not only provides essential untied income for service delivery, it also increases visibility and awareness of Human Nature within the community. Together, this fuels our capacity to meet growing demand while ensuring young people in the Northern Rivers can access support that truly meets their needs.

Government partners

We know what works, and we have the outcomes to prove it. With government support, we can:

- Expand evidence-based, place-based interventions for regional young people that address challenges early and prevent crisis.
- Deliver long-term results that reduce demand on acute and crisis services.
- Bring hope, connection, and resilience to more young people across the Northern Rivers and beyond.

Every contribution, partnership, or act of support helps young people access the care they need today – and builds the foundation for a stronger, healthier future.



Let's make the next decade even more impactful

For ten years, Human Nature has been walking alongside young people in the Northern Rivers, creating space for healing, growth, and connection. Every step forward has been made possible by the collective effort of our community, young people who trust us with their stories, families who reach out for support, dedicated staff and volunteers, and the partners and donors who believe in our vision.

The challenges facing young people aren't going away, and neither is our commitment to them. As we look ahead, we know the next decade will require even greater collaboration, innovation, and shared responsibility. Together, we can ensure that no young person is left to struggle alone, and that every young person has the chance to thrive.

We invite you to join us in writing the next chapter of Human Nature's story - whether by giving, partnering, or simply sharing our work with others who care. With your support, we can take the lessons of the past ten years and turn them into lasting change for generations to come.

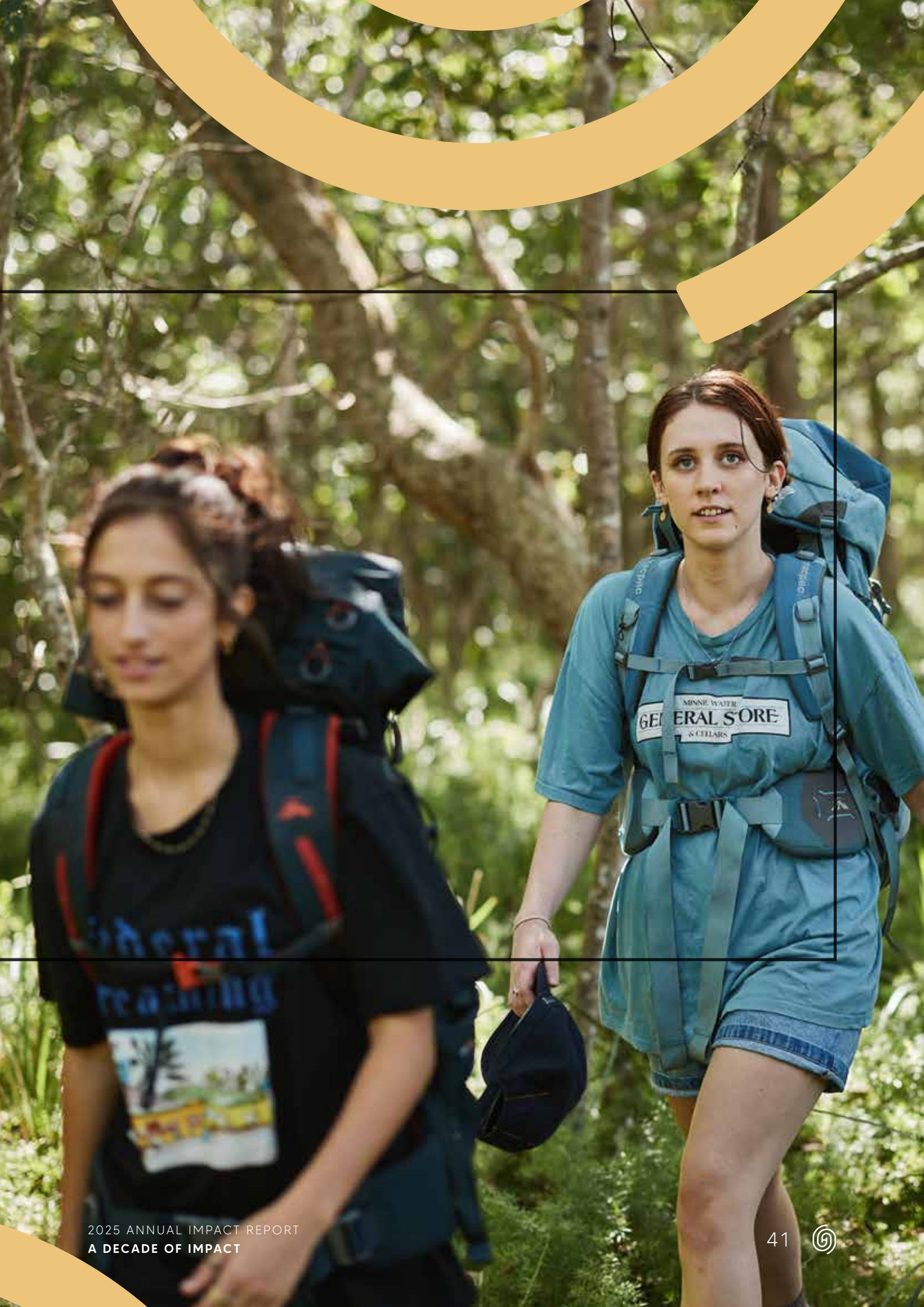
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Being a part of Human Nature over the past four years has been life-changing in ways I never expected. It's more than just an organisation, it's a support system that has been there through some of my hardest moments, making sure I was never left to struggle alone. You've given me stability, opportunities, and a sense of belonging that I'll carry with me always.

- Young person supported by Human Nature

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